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SOME MYSTICAL ADVENTURES

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BY

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	As Above, So Below	1
II.	Heresy	17
III.	The Elasticity of a Permanent Body	29
IV.	The Immensities	39
V.	Heirs of the Ages	55
VI.	The Master	74
VII.	Initiation	89
VIII.	A Measure of What Wisdom Means to Me	104
IX.	Adumbrations	121
X.	The Heroic Life	134
XI.	On the Track of Spirituality	148
XII.	Guesses at What to Expect	163
XIII.	On the Art of Symbolism	180
XIV.	The Self-taught	193
XV.	On the Way of the Path	208
XVI.	Mystic Reality	221
XVII.	The Deathless Race	237
XVIII.	Mystic Cosmogony	254
XIX.	Some Elementary Speculations	270
XX.	On the Nature of the Quest	284

SOME MYSTICAL ADVENTURES.

I.

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW.

"Heaven above, heaven below; stars above, stars below; all that is above thus also below."*—KIRCHER, *Prodrom. Copt.* pp. 193 and 275.

'As above, so below.' Is this great 'word' a sacramental phrase, a saying of wisdom, an aphorism, a mystic formula, a fundamental law; or a two-edged sword of word-fence that will probably do the wielder serious damage, if he is not first put through careful training in its handling—which?

Whether this famous saying is of Hermetic origin or no, we will not stay formally to inquire. In essence it is probably as old as human thought itself; and, as probably, the *idea* lying underneath it has been turned topsy-turvy more frequently than any other of the immortal company.

* Οὐρανὸς ἄνω, οὐρανὸς κάτω, ἄστρα ἄνω, ἄστρα κάτω, πᾶν ὃ ἄνω τοῦτο κάτω.

'As above, so below' doubtless enshrines some vast notion of analogical law, some basis of true reason, which would sum up the manifold appearances of things into one single verity.

But the understanding of the nature of this mystery of manifoldness from the one—all one and one in all—is not to be attained by careless thinking, or by some lucky guess, or by the pastime of artificial correspondencing.

Indeed—if the truth must out—in ninety-nine cases of a hundred, when one uses 'as above, so below' to clinch an argument, we find that we have begged the question from the start, ended where we began, and asserted the opposite of our *logos*.

Instead of illumining, not only the subject we have in hand, but all subjects, by a grasp of the eternal verity concealed within our saying, we have reversed it into the ephemeral and false proposition: 'As below, so above.' *Deus, inversus, est Demon;* and there's the devil to pay. But fortunately there is some compensation even in this in an illogical age; for, as all the mystic world knows, *Demon* is nothing else but *Deus inversus*.

Yes, even along our most modern lines of thought, even in propositions and principles that are every day coming more and more into

favour in the domain of practical philosophising, we find our ageless aphorism stood upon its head with scantiest ceremony.

In the newest theology, in the latest philosophy, we find a strong tendency to revive the ancient idea that man is the measure of the universe—whether we call this opinion pragmatism or by any other name that sounds more sweetly. 'As below,' then, 'so above.'

In fact we do not seem to be able to get away from this inversion. We *like* it thus turned upside down. And I am not altogether sure that it is not an excellent exercise thus to anthropomorphise the universe, if only to fling the shadow of our best within on to the infinite screen of the appearance of things without. For is not man kin really with all these—worlds, systems, elements, and spaces and infinitudes, times and eternities?

But this way of looking at the thing does not as a rule 'intrigue' the beginner in mystic speculation; it is all more naïve.

Fascinated with some little known fact of the below, marvelling at some striking incident that has come under his notice—striking, fascinating for him, of course—he usually puts a weight upon it that it cannot bear, exaggerates a particular into a universal, and, with a desperate plunge of joy, imagines that he has finally arrived at truth

—taking his topsy-turvy 'as below' for the eternal 'as above.'

He has not the faintest notion that, had he truly reached to that 'above,' he would know not only the solitary 'below' that has come dazzlingly into his cosmos, but every other 'below' of the same class.

But again from this height of 'philosophising,' let us come down to mystic commonplace. Of things physical we have certain definite knowledge, summed up in the accurate measurements and observations, and by the general mechanical art, of modern science. Beyond this domain there is for mechanical science x simply; for the 'seeing' mystic, however, there is not a simple x, but an indefinite series of phases of subtler and subtler sensations.

Now, as every intelligent reader knows, it is just the nature of these extra-normal impressions that is beginning to be critically investigated, on the lines of the impersonal method so justly belauded by all scientific workers.

In this domain, of such intense interest to all beginners, how shall we say our 'as above' applies? And here let us start at the beginning; that is to say, the first discrete degree beyond the physical—the psychic or so-called 'astral.'

What constitutes this a discrete degree? Is it

in reality a discrete degree? And by discrete I mean, is it discontinuous with the physical; that is to say, is there some fundamental difference of kind between the two?—'East is east, and West is west'; Psychic is psychic, and Physical is physical. But how? Sensationally only, or is it also logically to be distinguished; is there a fundamental law of difference between them?

The first difficulty that confronts us is this: That, however keen a man's subtler senses may be, no matter how keenly 'clear-seeing' he may have become, he seems unable to convey his own immediate experience cleanly to a second person, unless, perhaps, that second person can 'see' with the first.

Try how he may, he is apparently compelled to fall back on physical terms in which to explain.

Indeed, it is highly probable that all that has been written on the 'psychic,' has produced no other impression on non-psychic readers than that it is a subtler phase of the physical. And this, presumably, because the very seer himself in explaining the impressions he registers, to himself, that is, to his physical consciousness, has to translate them into the only forms that consciousness can supply, namely physical forms.

Indeed, there seems to be a gulf fixed between psychic and physical, so that those direct impressions which would pass thence to us, cannot. In other words, they cannot, in the very nature of things, come naked into this world; they must be clothed.

Now if this is true, if this is an unavoidable fact in the constitution of things, then the very nature of the psychic is removed from the nature of the physical by an unbridgeable gulf. 'East is east, and West is west.'

But *is* it really true? Is it only that, so far, no one is known who can bridge the gulf perfectly? Or supposing even that there be those who can so bridge it; is it that they are unable to make their knowledge known to others, simply because these others cannot bridge the gulf in *their* own personal consciousness, and therefore cannot follow the *continuum* of their more developed brethren?

But even supposing there is a material continuity from physical to psychic; it would seem that we must, so to speak, 'go' there, and that it cannot 'come' here. In other words, the really psychic cannot be truly registered in the physical, the image cannot correctly reproduce the prototype; for if it could, the one would be the other. What, then, is the nature of the difference of quality or of degree?

How, again, we ask, does psychic *fundamentally* differ from physical?

Can we in this derive any satisfaction from speculations concerning the so-called 'fourth dimension' of matter?

This is a subject of immense difficulty, and I do not here propose to enter into anything but its outermost court. All that I desire to note, for the present, is that all analogies between an imagined 'flatland' and our three-dimensional space, and between the latter and the supposed fourth-dimensional state, are based upon the most flagrant *petitio principii*. It is a case of 'As below, so above,' with a vengeance!

'Flatland'—space of two dimensions, *plus* the further gratuitous assumption of two-dimensional beings who have their living and their moving therein—is inconceivable as *matter* of any kind. A superficies is—an idea; it is not a thing of the sensible world. We conceive a superficies in our minds; it is a mental concept, it is not a sensible reality. We can't see it, or taste it, or hear it, or smell it, or touch it.

Our two-dimensional beings are at best figments of the imagination. They are absolutely inconceivable in terms of space as entities; they can't move, they can't be sensible of one another. For *in* the abstract concept called a surface, there can be no position from the standpoint of itself

and things like it, but only from the standpoint of a consciousness outside it. Even the most primitive sense of touch would be non-existent for our 'flatlanders,' for there would be nothing to touch. And so on, and so forth.

Therefore, to imagine how three-dimensional things would appear to the consciousness of a 'flatlander,' and from this, by analogy, to try to construct four-dimensional things from a series of three-dimensional phenomena, is, apparently, a very vicious circle indeed.

We can't get at it that way. We have to seek another way, a very different 'other way,' apparently, by means of which we may get out of *three* dimensions into—what? Into—*two*, either way or every way? Who knows?

Any way, the later Platonic School, curiously enough, called the 'psychic' the 'plane'—that is, the two-dimensional and not the four-dimensional, according to one of the so-called Chaldæan Oracles: "Do not soil the spirit nor turn the plane into the solid." The 'spirit' corresponds to what we have been calling the 'psychic' in its lower phase, and the 'plane' to the 'psychic' in its higher.

As Psellus says, in commenting on this logion: "The Chaldæans clothed the soul in two vestures; the one they called the spirituous, which is woven for it (as it were) out of the sensible body;

the other the radiant, subtle and impalpable, which they call the plane."

Higher than this were the 'lines' and 'points,' which pertained to the region of mind—formal and formless.

What, then, again we ask, is the psychic proper as compared with the physical? How do things appear on the psychic proper? For so far, in the very nature of things, whenever we talk 'down here' of the psychic we have to talk of it in terms of the physical.

In what, then, to use a famous term of ancient philosophising, consists its 'otherness'? Is 'otherness' in this to be thought of as distinguished simply by a gulf in matter, a gap?—this seems to be absurd; for "nature does not leap," she also "abhors a vacuum."

Here then we are confronted with the other side of the shield, with the unavoidable intuition that there *is* a *continuum* in matter from grossest to subtlest; and we may speculate that if a human entity were to progress through this series of grades of matter in space, he would have successively to leave his various 'vehicles,' molecular, atomic, inter-atomic, etc.—in states of ever greater tenuity—while, as in the case of John Brown, his soul would "go marching on," until it arrived at the last limit—whenever or

wherever that may be, in a universe that ever at every point enters into itself!

The idea of a cosmic 'stuff' or 'matter' that has the power to roll itself up continuously into itself, so to speak, is exceedingly illuminative, if thought of as the symbol of a process. But it requires to be interpreted in terms of force, as well as in terms of matter, before it can yield any adequate meaning.

All things, then, would appear to be solidified down here by the "sky's being rolled up carpet-wise," to paraphrase the Upaniṣhad. For the 'sky' is here the 'ether'—the one substance, the simplicity of things. The 'above' is thus 'involved' into the 'below'; and if we could only follow the process, perchance we should then be able really to understand something of the truth underlying our aphorism.

As a matter of fact, this *continuum* of matter is the ground on which all scientific thinking is based; perpetual and continuous transformation but no sudden leaps—orderly evolution, no miraculous or uncaused spontaneous surprises.

Now, if this be true, it follows that, some day, the direct line of 'descent' from 'psychic' to physical may be controlled mechanically by human invention; and so the psychic be made physically visible to even the most hopelessly

profane (from a psychic standpoint). And not only so, but the errors of human observation, which vitiate all present psychic investigation, may, in that Utopian future, be obviated in as marvellous a fashion as the errors of physical observation are now eliminated, by the wonderfully delicate instruments already devised by human ingenuity.

This seems immediately to follow from the major premise of a *continuum* of this nature; and many people believe it is so, and base themselves upon it as on a sure foundation of fact. But, somehow or other, I am by no means satisfied that this will be the case. Is our salvation to be dependent upon machines; are we to become *dei ex machinis*?

But what has all this to do with 'As above, so below'? Why, this: If the sensible world rises by stages (and descends by stages, too, for that matter) from this gross state familiar to us by our normal senses, through ever finer and finer grades of matter, we finally reach—ay, there's the rub; what do we reach? Where do we start?

The truth of the matter is—be it whispered lowly—you can't *think it out* in terms of matter. But take the 'ever so thin' idea for the moment, as sufficiently indefinite for any mystic who is not a metaphysician, using the latter term in

the old, old way, where *physis* included all nature, that is, *natura*, the field of becoming.

'As above, so below'—how many stages above? Let us say seven, if it is so desired. The 'above' as compared with the 'below' will then be very nebulous indeed, a sort of innermost 'primitive ground' of some at present inconceivable mode and fashion. There may be 'correspondence,' but that correspondence must be traced through numerous orders of matter, where the very next succeeding order to the physical already acts as force, or energy, to the matter which falls beneath our normal senses.

Here we are again, at the very outset, face to face with the 'psychic' or 'astral' *x*—which, compared with the physical, should be regarded as a 'system of forces' rather than as a mould of the same fashion and form as the physical.

And if this view is, at any rate, one stage nearer the reality than the interpretation of the psychic by purely physical imagery and symbolism—what *can* possibly be the nature of our No. 7, or No. 1, 'primitive ground' stage; when already at the first remove we exhaust all our possibilities of description?

For we certainly do not get much 'forrarder' by simply flinging the forms and pictures of the physical, as it were, on to a series of mirrors

which differ from one another only in their tenuity. At any rate, it appears so to the reflecting mind; though at the same time it seems quite as natural that the impressions of the subtler senses should be clothed in physical forms when reflected in physical consciousness.

Let it be understood once for all, that I have not the slightest pretension in any way to decide between these apparent contradictions of sense and reason; indeed, I personally believe it to be unseemly and disastrous to attempt to separate the eternal spouses of this sacred marriage. In most intimate union must they ever be together, to give birth to the true Man—who is also their common source.

Still it is of advantage continuously to keep before our minds the question: What is a prototype; what is a paradigm; what a *logos*—a reason; what an idea? What, for instance, to use Platonic terms, is the *autozōon*, the animal itself, or that which gives life to itself, as compared with all animals; what the ever the 'same,' as compared with all the 'others'?

The intuition of things that underlay the philosophising of the Western world at its birth in conscious reasoning, from the time of Pythogoras onwards, gives us preliminary help, it is true, in thus setting the noumenal or ideal over against the sensible or phenomenal—the

mind over against the soul. But the characteristic of union is that it 'sees,' not another, but itself, and knows it ever 'sees' itself.

This is the 'Plain of Truth,' where ever are the true paradigms, and ideas, and reasons of all things; and when we say 'where' we do not mean place or space; for it is the everlasting causation of these, and is not conditioned by them, but self-conditions itself.

It would take too long further to pursue this high theme in the present adventure. One thing alone I have desired to call attention to: the careless translation of living ideas into rigid notions, the danger of falling too readily into that higher materialism that Stallo calls the 'reification' of concepts. For when you have 'reified' your hypothesis — be it gravity, or atomicity, or vibration—and reduced it to a rigid notion, a definite objective something for you, you have still got only the shadow and not the substance; the appearance, the phenomenon, and not the underlying truth, the noumenon.

But to conclude; that 'sight' which reveals to man the 'reasons' of things, is surely a more divine possession than that 'sight' which sees the sensible forms of things only, no matter how exquisitely beautiful and grandiose such forms may be.

And when I say 'sees' the 'reasons' of things,

do I mean the intellectual grasping of some single explanation, some formula, some abstraction? By no means; I mean by 'reason' *logos* in its most vital sense. I mean that when we 'see' the 'reasons' of things, we see our 'selves' in all things; for our real selves are the true ground of our being, the that in us which constitutes us 'sons of God'—*logoi*, as He is *Logos*, kin to Him.

'As above, so below.' What, then, is the 'above' where there is no place, no direction, no dimension, and no time?

But even so, *is* the 'above' superior to the 'below'? Ah, that is where the mind breaks down, unable to grasp it. Is Eternity greater than Time? Is the Same mightier than the Other?

Of course it is, we say, as so many in so many schools have said before. But is it *really* so? Are we not still in the region of the opposites; neither of which can exist without the other, and each of which *is* co-equal with the other?

We are still in the region of words—words simply in this case, not living reasons; though the same term does duty for both in Greek—*logos;* showing yet once again that in verity *Demon est Deus inversus.*

No words indeed can tell of Him—or of That, if you so prefer, though the neuter gender is as

little appropriate as the masculine. "Thou that art to be worshipped in silence alone!"

As Thou art above, so art Thou below; as Thou art in Thyself, so art Thou in Man; as Thyself is in Thee, so is Thy Man in Thyself—now and for ever.

II.

HERESY.

"After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers."—PAUL, in *Acts* xxiv. 14.

PAUL was a heretic, Jesus was a heretic, Socrates was a heretic, the Buddha was a heretic. Indeed we might continue the list with most of the greatest names in history, and certainly with the names of all the founders of religions, philosophies and sciences.

It is an instructive spectacle to see how every effort to make men think, and to render them more self-conscious, has been resisted with outcry, contumely and bitterness. The resistance to the new impulse is invariably begotten of devotion to that which in its day was new; for the heresy of to-day frequently becomes the orthodoxy of to-morrow. It is the swing of the pendulum.

The pioneers of the world have invariably been considered heretics, for they are ever those who seek to shake themselves free from the inertia of the established order of things; they

labour in the pains of a new birth, striving to free themselves from the womb of convention, to come forth regenerate into the sunlight of self-conscious realisation.

The lover of wisdom is thus a natural heretic for the orthodox of the moment, and his views and beliefs must naturally be considered by the lovers of things-as-they-seem-to-be as disruptive of their most cherished convictions.

But is the lover of wisdom simply a heretic, in the ordinary sense of the word, when judged by an experience that looks beyond the conventional standards of the moment, both as to heresy and orthodoxy? I think not. He is a heretic in a far more extended sense. So heretical, indeed, that he may in many things be more orthodox than the orthodox; he looks beyond conventional orthodoxy and heresy towards a reconciliation of contraries, in the state of understanding that can appreciate all views at their just value.

This at any rate is the ideal of such a lover; though undoubtedly many who think they are such lovers, are still content to remain in the inertia of a new convention, after they have freed themselves from the inertia of the generally accepted conventions of their day.

It is of course heretical in the Western world of to-day to believe in the doctrines of karma and reincarnation; equally so is it considered

heretical, by many new believers in these doctrines, to hold to the dogmas of vicarious atonement and the immediate creation of the soul at birth.

And yet the doctrine of vicarious atonement cannot be altogether foreign to the root-idea that lies at the back of the Mahāyāna Buddhist faith, for example, which, while basing itself on the doctrines of karma and reincarnation, at the same time teaches the renunciation of Nirvāṇa, and the remaining on earth to save humanity. There is indubitably a measure of vicariousness in this doctrine; otherwise, if men have entirely to save themselves, there would be no meaning in preaching such an ideal.

Again, the doctrine of Southern Buddhism with regard to the unreality of the soul is practically the same, in some of its forms, as the belief in the creation of a new soul at birth.

These apparent contradictions, then, are not so utterly incompatible and mutually exclusive as they may seem to be at first sight; on the contrary, the evidence afforded by a study of the existing developments of these doctrines, and by a deeper acquaintance with the results of a more searching analysis into their fundamental nature, seems to point to another side of the question, where the contraries seem to begin to take on the nature of each other, and their

irreconcilability appears but an outward show of hostility, veiling the mystery of an intimate friendship.

For if the true Path of Wisdom lies precisely in the midst of all contraries, and the traveller on this Way is he who delights in the sport of magical transformation, whereby "the right becomes the left, and the left the right, the above the below, and the below the above, and the male with the female neither male nor female," as one of the old wisdom-sayings has it, then surely he will find, even in the most contradictory doctrines, some common elements that can become, as it were, the solvent which shall eventually transmute the two into a living unity. For Wisdom is that which includes all contraries.

To me it has been one of the greatest joys of such study, that the more I have learned of the nature of the Gnosis, or by whatever other name we may choose to call the Wisdom that transcends normal knowledge, the more I have realised that no doctrine that has ever held the minds and hearts of men, is without some measure of ensouling truth.

I have found that many a doctrine which, at first, I rejected as manifestly absurd, was seemingly so only because I had not learned to look at it with the right focus; I had paid more

attention to what foolish people had said about it, than to what the wise had said, and had not let the doctrine speak for itself in the court of uncommon pleas.

For example, the dogma of creation out of nothing used to distress me, until I came across a pleader in that court of universal justice—old Basilides, who spoke wisely about the creation of the things-that-are from the things-that-are-not, so that I could link up the idea with the Sat and Asat of the Upaniṣhads, and find contentment in the thought.

Of course I do not for one moment pretend that anyone else must be satisfied with what Basilides says. It was he, however, who showed me the way out, although the orthodox call him a desperate heretic and overwhelm him with abuse. And so perhaps he may help some others, who prefer even a one-eyed gnosis to a blind faith, and who believe it is not a sin to use their intellect (as far at any rate as it will go) for fear of becoming unpopular with those who, in the pride of not-knowing, shout *Credo quia absurdum* on all occasions.

Many of my readers must be familiar with the tyranny of a Church whose stereotyped answer to every questioning of its authority is: This is the pride of the intellect, my son, the most subtle of all sins. The virtue of humility, the

greatest of the virtues, is what you lack. It is in vain you protest your humility, when it is just this pride of intellect which makes you refuse now, at this moment, to submit yourself to the Church's authority.

What this type of mind can never see, is that there is a right and wrong use of pride, and a wrong and right use of humility. Pride and humility are one of another, and the pride of humility is as much pride as any other form of that passion. The humble use of pride in God's good gift of reason is more truly worship of Him than a debasing of oneself before the tyranny of self-interest, that arrogates to itself the dominion over the souls of men.

It is this jealous spirit of monopoly in God's good things that has given birth to all the horrors of religious persecution. Men are not ashamed to pray to their God to deliver them from all infidels and heretics as anathema. And times without number they have taken care to make this prayer come true by fire and sword and rack. And the irony of it all is that those nearest to them in faith, are invariably regarded as the most damnable.

It is, indeed, a remarkable thing that when differences arise among those who have previously been most closely united in religious faith and aspiration, then is the hostility most bitter and

relentless. We see it on all sides. What is the reason of this great bitterness?

May it not be, in some measure, that those who have been so closely associated in religious things, who have so intensely and blindly believed that theirs was the only way, theirs the one means of salvation for all men, who are convinced that there should be one Church, and that their own, are enraged beyond measure at the shattering of their hopes by the dissent of their brethren, and believe that it is their late comrades who are solely responsible for the outrage they have suffered, instead of recognising that they have throughout been living in a fool's paradise, and that their late associates deserve their deepest thanks for bringing them to their senses?

There can never be uniformity of belief so long as man remains as he is; and God forbid that humanity should ever become a mechanical will-less organism! The end of man is not that he should be made in one mould; the destiny of the nations is not that the ideal of a grim industrial age should be realised, and so an engine be evolved which shall turn out a host of like products of monotonous similarity.

The end of man is knowledge of man preparatory to union with God. God is not only one but many, single and manifold; and the

knowledge of this manifoldness is as necessary to true Gnosis as is the knowledge of unity. Gnosis is the knowing of these two as the necessary complements each of the other; and the proper gnostic meditation is the holding of both in mind at once, in a balanced contemplation, which will afford the right conditions for the truth to come to birth, in a fruitful conception of practical wisdom, that can find expression in all moods and modes of thought and action.

It is of course impossible to prevent the believers in one set of exclusive doctrines regarding the lover of this wisdom as a heretic; but it should be possible for such lovers to be on their guard against falling into this naïve duality, and selecting a set of dogmas as orthodox, when the sole heresy for 'those in Gnosis' should be the ceasing from the effort to reconcile even the most appalling contradictions.

For surely one of our most cherished hopes is that one day we may be initiated into the final truth, and learn how God and Devil are two sides of one Ineffable Mystery, which indeed even now, in our ignorance, we are forced to believe, in spite of our inability to raise the veil, and in spite of the danger we all recognise in preaching such a doctrine to those unprepared morally and spiritually.

If I am not entirely mistaken, it is precisely

because the stereotyping of one particular form of faith is considered no longer to be desirable, that the spirit of the new age is endeavouring above all things to bring us face to face with contradiction on contradiction, to give us no pause and no peace, so that when we have thought at last we were safe in one position, established for ever in some great formula, we are suddenly shaken out of our inertia by the potent energy of some new idea that is forced upon our notice.

It is only thus that our little minds can be stretched into the all-embracing nature of the Great Mind that holds all opposites in steady poise within it. It is the Titanic forces of expansion, the true Stretchers or Expanders of sympathy and consciousness and knowledge, that make our little minds elastic, so that they may be able to extend in true ecstatic understanding of the most mind-shattering contradictions, antitheses and paradoxes.

What, then, can heresy and orthodoxy, in their ordinary connotations, mean to us, when it should be our joy to embrace them both and transcend them?

It will of course be objected by the many that a plain man wants a plain doctrine, and that this reconciliation of contraries is a juggler's business.

Well, we are not objecting to plain doctrines for plain folk; they are laid down with admirable precision in all the great religions, and we would no more think of doing away with them than of abolishing the police regulations.

They are the bye-laws of the ethical code of the higher polity, and teach men to be good citizens of the world; but there is a still higher code of fundamental laws of wisdom, and one of them is precisely this reconciliation of the contraries.

It is not a juggler's business, but Divine Magic, the Great Art of Wisdom, that transmutes evil into good, and transforms the impossible into the Great Potency wherewith the Divine perpetually energises.

In the freer life of the Spirit we are for ever outbreathing some old heresy and inbreathing some new orthodoxy, and outbreathing some old orthodoxy and inbreathing some new heresy; it is the greater life of the Spirit, whereby we grow in wisdom.

But if we would practise this true science of breath, the *prāṇayāma* of Gnosis, we must hold our mental breath in balance, so that the great change of gnostic tendency may be effected, that from life we may pass to light, from the vitalisation of the mind to the illumination of the life.

Our minds are, at present, for the most part fixed; they are crystallised and formalised, and most rigidly so in the forms of our religious and scientific and philosophic beliefs. These masculine forms must be dissolved by the heat of the love of the feminine formless mind. Concentration must merge into contemplation, before the true re-formation, the 'enformation according to Gnosis,' can be effected, and the crystals of the formal intellect be transmuted into the living essences of pure intelligence.

How often has one paused amazed at the terror and hate of heresy displayed by the orthodox, and puzzled over the question: Why are they so terrified; why do they hate so bitterly? All the more so when it is found that the object of their detestation, not infrequently, proves on acquaintance excellent food for thought. This seems to differ little fundamentally from the commercial instinct that finds expression in Trusts. They fear for their monopoly, their trade-prospects, their combine. For naturally one would be foolish to fear for the Truth—that, at any rate, may be trusted to look after itself.

But, it may be said that they fear for the souls of their fellows, lest they be led into error and so perish everlastingly. But have they not in this simply created a Moloch of their own

imagination, and would make all but their fellow-slaves pass through the fire lighted by their inhumanity, in sacrifice to the black shadow of themselves which they worship as God?

For the true lover of Wisdom there is no fear, but only joy in the unshakable belief that every questioning of opinion can end eventually only in the clearer shining forth of the Sun of Truth. His orthodoxy is to rejoice in heresy, and his heresy is to substitute any of the orthodoxies of the world for the Living Truth.

III.

THE ELASTICITY OF A PERMANENT BODY.

PERHAPS it may be thought that I propose, in this adventure, to treat of some recondite problem of physics; but that is not my intention. I propose briefly to consider the nature of the permanent element in a religious and international body.

Many confuse the idea of body with notions of shape and form, but I would venture to suggest that form is of the mind while body is of substance. There is a doctrine that man is possessed of a 'permanent body,' the substantial ground, as it were, from which proceed and to which return the births and deaths of his impermanent appearances, the perennial root of his evolutionary becomings, and the storehouse of his diversified experiences.

It is not asserted that this 'body' is unconditionally everlasting, but rather that it is permanent in the sense of lasting as long as man desires himself to be a separate individual.

It is his last limit as man, his 'Ring Pass Not' until the Great Day 'Be one with Us,' when man transcends individuality, and wins his freedom from the dominion of the spheres of evolution, by making joyful surrender of himself,—that is, of every thought of possessions of his own as apart from others, even of possession in the substance of his so-thought individuality. All his powers of their own selves make joyful surrender of themselves to the Great Powers, and thus becoming these Powers, as Trismegistus says, he is in God.

But this is apotheōsis, the transcending of the man-state of separate existence, and the entering into the Communion of Those-that-are; that is to say, the energising in the Everlasting Body of all things.

The 'permanent body,' then, is not the Everlasting Body, but the age-long substantial limit of the separated man-consciousness. How long this æon of substantial limit lasts, depends on the nature of the man's activities; nevertheless this 'body' must in any case be considered as permanent, when contrasted with the length of days of the bodies of incarnation which a man uses in his many lives on earth, or in the 'three worlds.'

When, however, we come to consider the meaning of 'body' in this connection, we should

be careful to keep our ideas concerning it as fluid as possible. We are here on the very borderland of individuality, and it depends entirely on the nature of the activities of the man whether, or no, the substance of this 'body' shall be so condensed and crassified as to form 'sheaths' to veil and dim the consciousness of the Self, or so wisely enformed and woven into such fine textures that it can supply 'vestures' of glory and radiance for the manifestation of the greater mysteries.

The nature of this 'body' changes completely, according as the desire of the man is set to 'go forth,' or the will of the man is fixed to 'return.' We therefore find it described in the ancient books under quite contradictory epithets, such as ignorance and bliss; for it is on the borderland between the particular and the general, the individual and the cosmic.

It is indeed one of the most difficult concepts for us to understand; for if we understood it really, we should have solved the riddle of what is called in Indian philosophy *māyā* (illusion), and *avidyā* (nescience), and *kāraṇa*, that is to say 'causal,' in the sense of its being the cause of our continuing to proceed forth into duality, and therefore the root of ignorance and the source of illusion. Nevertheless at the same time it is also the vehicle of our return to reality,

and our means of contact with unity; as such it is the complement of knowledge, and the spouse of the Divine energising.

It is, therefore, evident that if we call it 'body,' we shall be doing less violence to the meaning of its actual nature, by qualifying it with the contradictory epithet 'spiritual,' than by leaving it unqualified, to the danger of its being confused with notions of physical bodies. I should prefer to call it substance rather than matter, vehicle rather than body.

The legitimate lord of this living nature is Ātman or Spirit, the Self; this pure substance is corrupted by the misdeeds of men.

When we consider these mysteries from the human point of view—that is, as related to our individual selves—we have, it is true, some immediate feelings, intuitions and experiences to go upon; but when we proceed to argue, on analogy, with regard to 'bodies' other than our own, we run the risk of setting up our limited selves as a measure of the universe.

When, therefore, we come to consider a body of individuals, we must be very careful not to beg the question, by assuming that we are dealing with a problem of a like nature to that of an individual human being. We are here face to face with the idea of a group, and should rather seek analogies in whatever notions we

may have, as to the nature of that far more difficult concept which is sometimes called the 'group-soul,' or 'group-spirit.'

This idea connotes something that is other than the individual. The term is generally applied to animals, and not infrequently, without more ado, we conclude that the human individual is vastly superior, and in our conceit thank God that we have got beyond that stage. But this is a short-sighted view, based upon the comparison of a single man with a single animal. The group-soul idea, I would venture to think, is connected with far wider conceptions.

In the first place, it is connected with the tradition of the 'sacred animals,' which all but a few in the West have relegated to the limbo of exploded superstitions. The 'sacred animals' are said to be 'lords of types,' of whom the mass of animals of that type are, as it were, the corpuscles of their body. These 'corpuscles' are ever coming and going, ever being born and dying; but so long as that 'type' is manifested, there is a permanent vehicle for it even on the physical plane. These 'lords of types,' it is said, are great intelligences of the Master-mind; they are the truly 'sacred animals,' types of intelligence as well as orderers of modes of life.

Now what obtains among the animals, we may well believe, is not in principle confined to

them alone; it is rather a showing forth, in modes and forms that man can distinguish plainly in the external world, of the mysteries of his own greater nature.

As there are forms and modes without, so there are forms and modes within; and within our own kingdom there is, I would venture to suggest, a precise analogy with the animal group-soul and the lords of its types.

Families, clans, and peoples, are all, according to types, conditioned by super-human intelligences, and representative of the 'permanent bodies' of such greater beings. Here the bond is blood; and blood is, I venture to think, more potent than mind, using the term mind here as indicative of mind in individual man.

When, however, we come to consider a religious body, we are confronted with a still more difficult problem; and, therefore, whatever suggestions one ventures to put forward, must be advanced with all reserve.

I can well believe that the real work of such a body may be the evolution of a conscious instrument, or permanent ground, for the incarnation or manifestation of a Great Soul; that is to say, that while at the same time it affords the conditions for its individual members to perfect themselves, it should also have a common object that no individual in it can achieve by him-

self, and that this object should be the endeavour to realise consciously a corporate common life, by means of which the power, wisdom and love of a Great Soul may manifest itself to the world.

This, I believe, is also a question of 'blood,' for 'the blood is the life.' But this blood will be the Blood of those who are 'of the Race of Him.'

There is much talk of a 'new race,' and some people are looking for a new type of race on the lines of the old separated nations and peoples but I would fain believe that the 'new race' will, as it has ever been prophesied concerning it, be of every nation under heaven, as far as its physical bodies are concerned.

This has been attempted before; nations and communities of religionists have boasted themselves to be *the* people, are doing so to-day. This exclusiveness should be avoided, if we would live according to reality and grow in wisdom. Performance, and not the making of claims, should be our business, if we would attain to gnosis.

The Spirit that we desire to see incarnate is, I believe, not the spirit of the individual, but a Spirit that subordinates individuality to the good of the whole.

Many are endeavouring after this ideal in manifold instinctive ways. Some, again, have

the ambition consciously to set about this great work, and knowingly to be about this holy business; they long to come into conscious contact with a Great Soul of the order of Him who uses the whole body of humanity as His Body, and knows that all types of bodies and souls and minds are necessary for the purpose of the expression of His Life.

With such an enlightening belief, it is scarcely possible to think that any one particular type of religion will absorb the rest, any more than we can believe that one member or limb of a body can absorb the rest; for if it should be so, it would be along the lines of disease and not of health.

Therefore, if we would consciously realise the life of the whole, we are bound to accept as the condition of our common endeavour that we shall make no distinctions of creed, sex, class, or country. The bond of union is to go deeper than any of these distinctions; for the bond that binds us together as members of a natural family in our inner nature, must surely be of a spiritual order.

Now we are told by science that "a body is perfectly elastic when it has the property of resisting a given deformation equally," and we are further informed that "all bodies have different elasticities at different temperatures."

Temperature, in the case of living beings, applies especially to the blood; and temperature, when thought of in connection with the deeper meaning we have ventured to give to the idea of blood, in an organism bound together for a spiritual purpose, is rather temperament.

To be perfectly elastic, therefore (and their aim is surely eventual perfection), the members of such a body should have the property of resisting any given deformation equally. They should have the will to resist equally throughout the body—that is to say, in every unit or corpuscle of which it is composed—any temporary deformation from the type. Those who have not the power of resisting and remain deformed, necessarily cease for the time to realise that they form part of the permanent elastic body of this spiritual type.

The most apparent nature of this type seems to me to be very clearly set forth in the ethical teachings of all the great religions. The further marvels of its glorious nature are for the most part hidden from us, for they transcend the individual consciousness. But this much we can know, that it is this type or mould of being that develops in us, or impresses upon our substance, what we very rightly call moral character.

The permanent element must therefore be

sought in the power of resistance to all deformations from rectitude,—to any impressions but those of the Great Souls that are lords of truly human types, and who, we may believe, manifest their greater nature for men's consciousness through groups of like-willed human beings.

Elasticity is further defined in the dictionaries as "possessing the power or quality of recovering from depression or exhaustion; able to resist a depressing or exhausting influence; capable of sustaining shocks without permanent injury: as elastic spirits."

Let us, then, whatever religious body we may belong to, strive to be ever more and more elastic. "Elastic spirits," an excellent combination! That is the business we should ever be about, the great work.

Re-formation, re-adjustment, re-storation and perpetual re-freshment must ever be more and more possible for spiritual cosmopolitans. Elasticity of body, soul and spirit is the aim, that so men may individually and collectively mirror forth the activities of some Great Soul that shall vehicle the true Mind of Wisdom.

IV.

THE IMMENSITIES.

"THE fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." So wrote the ancient Hebrew hymn-maker, echoing the dominant thought of the religious consciousness of his race.

"The beginning of philosophy is wonder." Thus the genius of Greece expressed itself through the written word of Plato, a sentence that in later years became a dogma of some religio-philosophical schools.

We might contrast these utterances; we might, by dwelling solely on the differences conjured up by the words, elaborate a thesis on the opposition of Jew and Greek in things religious, and illustrate it by many examples drawn from the history and literature of these two typical peoples.

But no matter how, seemingly, effectively this might be accomplished, no matter how true in fact the antitheses might appear to be to the practical reason, to the contemplative mind the still voice whispers: "They both look to the

same idea; they mean the same within; they speak different dialects of one language. That is all."

For that fear which is the beginning of wisdom, is the germ of Perfect Love which casteth out all fear. It is the beginning of that Perfect Love itself,—itself first looking at itself, new to its own contemplation, dissolving itself to be itself. It is the awe of its own greatness, the marvelling at its own beauty, which is ever too vast, too dazzling, for it in its state of becoming; for becoming is in time, while being is in the eternity. It thus dissolves itself into itself, its dissolution being its genesis, and its genesis its own regeneration.

In very truth is wonder the beginning of wisdom; and wisely was it that in ancient days the master bade the pupil contemplate the heavens.

Gaze, then, at the immensities of space, and wonder at the marvels and the mysteries that dwell within its measureless profundities. There they shine forth, each in his own peculiar glory, suns in countless profusion, galaxy on galaxy, marvel on marvel, mystery on mystery, each infinitely transcending the wit of human mind, the utmost power of man's imagination.

There, in the quiet and the stillness, they shine forth, the watchers and eternal witnesses,

the all-seeing eyes of God, who see with their own light, the self-revealing greatnesses,—vast beyond realisation, and yet but atoms in the great economy of Him, whose inexpressible transcendency they faintly mediate to such of the little minds of tiny mortals here below as contemplate the heavens.

We moderns call them suns, and think that we have seen them. We have devised as well light-picturing instruments to register the countless suns our dim eyes cannot behold.

But have we really *seen* a sun? Have we ever truly seen the heavens? Some of the wise ones of the ancients say we have not; we have seen but reflections of the heavens and their denizens.

At any rate the Pythagorean school taught that the air shut out the sight of heaven, and mortals saw no more of the True Light than fish can see of things on earth. The Plain of Truth began above the air.

And in this I would subscribe myself a follower of Pythagoras, as in much else. I know I have not seen the heavens, I have not seen a sun, but only so much of these mysteries as are possible for mortal eyes. I have seen as through a veil shinings and spaces.

But does this constitute me a contemplator of the heavens? Is contemplation the seeing of

appearances,—or rather of veiled sights? And how many veils are there upon the Great Mother,—or rather, how many veils has she most lovingly bound round our eyes that we may not be blinded?

Who has revealed the Vision, who has made plain the Mysteries, who has raised the Veil of the Temple for mortal sight? Is it the passing fashion of the day in physical theorising that is to be accepted as the way, the truth and the life, in the gnosis of things? Is it the phase of mind that laughs to scorn the immemorial belief, that the suns are bodies of great souls, that shall be regarded as the genuine successor of the instruction of the hierophants of old?

What authority has been given to the thinking apparatus of some ephemeral dust-specks, on the bosom of one planet of a single sun, to banish Soul from the Kingdom of the Heavens, and to reduce the Fulness to the emptiness of bodies of purely physical atomicity?

Shall such vain opinions be called true visions of genuine contemplators of the heavens? Are they not rather passing mind-phases of gazers at the reflections of the Mysteries only—dim shadows of the realities? For a Mystery in its high meaning is not some small hidden

thing, or some artificial secret; a Mystery is a reality, a true being, a greatness, an eternity, an æon.

Yet even when thought of physically alone, even when the reflected bodies of Those-that-are, even when the surface-shadows of the Realities only are considered, how marvellous and wonderful are they! How, even with such insanely self-imposed limitations, does the intellect expand as it endeavours to measure itself with the provable immensities that open infinitely before its purely physical observation!

To what height, then, of wonder on wonder does not the spirit soar when it adds soul and mind to its contemplation, and dares to imagine to itself its own possibilities?

And who is to say that this is illegitimate, that this is unscientific, if science means gnosis? Is it unscientific to search out and to seek, to aspire to, and to worship the inner nature of things? Is it unscientific even to dare to imagine without the permission of the received formularies of the day, when there is the authority of great souls in the past that such an exercise of the spirit is natural, and the legitimate way of growth?

And if the heavens and their denizens are so marvellously beautiful, even when seen so dimly in reflection, how much more marvellous is it

that man with his microscopic frame should dare not only to gaze upon their greatnesses, but even to penetrate the veil of their mysteries?

What infinite daring, what measureless potentiality must there not be in him, that he who in comparison is so infinitely small, should have the hardihood to scrutinise the infinitely great, and seek to measure himself with the immeasurable!

What daring is there not in him! Even his persistent error shows this. For has not man, as long as we have record of him, dared to define the indefinable? Has he not set forth system on system, each boasting itself to explain how this all came into existence, each proclaiming the manner and way of Deity?

And his persistent error is this, that in definition he has ceased for the moment from the 'fear of the Lord,' he has ceased from 'wonder.' In imagining a beginning, he has come to an end. He has not defined the universe; he has simply defined himself.

But even this error seems provided for in the great economy of things. For once that he has defined himself, or let others define the universe for him, is he not thrown back on himself, and has he not to learn in small what he might otherwise have learned in great? It is still the same problem in other terms; for

small and great are but two facets of one and the same mystery.

The universe is no more measurable by size as the infinitude of greatness, than it is by size as the infinitude of minuteness.

As there is no conceivable end to the vastness of things, so is there no imaginable limit to the smallness of things. Thus are there immensities of smallness as there are immensities of greatness.

To think this, to respond to so natural a feeling of the contemplative mind, requires no authority from modern physical theorists. In ancient days it had long been written that if He is greater than the great, so also is He smaller than the small.

As, then, there are universes without, so also are there universes within; as there are heavens without, so there are heavens within; as there are suns without, so are there suns again within.

And of what kind are these suns within? Have we ever seen them? Do we not rather see some dim reflection of them as through a glass darkly—even in our imagination of them?

An atom—what is it? Is it not a universe—a mystery, an æon? For what is size? Have things in themselves size, or is this not rather a quality bestowed upon them by the ignorance of man, who persists in measuring the universe

and all therein by the stick of his physical body, instead of by the canon of his mind and the infinitude of his own spirit?

And if man's high privilege is to contemplate the heavens — the heavens above and the heavens below, the heavens without and the heavens within—so also is it his joyful task to contemplate his fellows, his connate immensities and brother-mysteries, the suns of his immediate galaxy.

Shall he venture to number these, to say how many there may be? Must there not be an infinitude of these like to himself? Can he count even their bodies? Or shall he say their souls are 'numerous' as their bodies? Is the divinity of his humanity to be counted by number? Is it so many, and of such a kind, that he can definitely number the spirit that is the ground of his being?

Not so thought Plato of old, when his mind went forth to contemplate the immensities. For when he set himself to image to himself the number of the souls of men, he ceased from definition and bowed his head in marvel before the sight revealed to his amazed intelligence. The souls of men were infinite, for were they not equal in number to the stars? Could it be otherwise, for were not all things made after the Pattern?

And so it would seem that man, not only stands midway between the infinitely great and infinitely small, but standing midway between them, he embraces both infinitudes—he the immensity of immensities—if he but dare to add marvel to marvel in his daring. Such at any rate seems to be the promise and potency of the Divinity in man, the contemplator.

But if someone should say that these and such like thoughts are blasphemy against High God, let him reflect that there is greater blasphemy in making Man, the Son of God, less than the highest image man can think out of himself. For is not the maker greater than the image?

And if it be rather blasphemy for man to tell himself how little he is, without at the same time also telling himself how great he may be, how much more ill-speaking is it to image God as less even than what man can think of his own possibilities?

And yet how many delight in setting limitations to Divinity! It is chiefly those who know but little of the immeasurable possibilities of human nature, who know but little of what man has thought, even in the brief period preserved in physical record, that presume to be better acquainted with the ways of Deity than they are with the nature of a single human soul.

Even of those who have had some touch of a greater life, how many have there not been who, intoxicated with the first draught of deathlessness, drunken and beclouded with the excess of light, presume to set forth how the universe came into existence?

They know in their senses that the place in which they are is narrow, and that the greatness exists. And straightway they set to work to create in their minds a new narrow place, by defining how the universe came into being.

And so we have many systems in the past constructed by seers and thinkers, showing simply where they individually have ceased and come unto an end, where their marvelling has for a time departed from them and they have closed their eyes to still greater sights.

And so they write down the vision as they think they have felt it. And as it is great and of a germinal universal nature, as compared with what they have previously known, they are filled with a desire to explain all things; and so they use the language of wholes and apply it to a single part of the ineffable mystery.

And yet these systems serve for the moment, provided they can awake in others some reflection of the marvel awakened in the seer or thinker. But when they fail in this, they become hindrances and not helps, prisons and not open

spaces, deadeners of thought instead of inspirers of effort.

Turn to the history of religion, especially in the Western world, and learn how theological systems have become Molochs to whom the fairest children of men's thought have persistently been sacrificed. Who can say how many marvellous intuitions have not been thus slain by timid souls, who in fear have offered the most god-like imagination of their minds to the idol of Received Theology?

Nor is petrified theology the only substance out of which such idols are hewn; the idols fashioned out of crystallised science also have claimed many a victim, claim many a victim to-day.

It is true that a new age is dawning in the world to-day, and many idols are being overthrown. But when has a new age not been dawning in the world; and when has the world not replaced the old idols with new ones?

The man of the world is innately an idol-worshipper, and so long as he is of the world he will continue to be so. But this 'world' is not the Cosmos of God; it is the false imagination of man, the world of opinion.

The True World alone is the Image of God, the Actual Universe, — physical, sensational, mental, moral, and spiritual,—the Son of God

par excellence. In the image of this Image has man been made potentially, and his one duty, or rather his one joy, should be to make that image like unto the Great Image in actuality.

And the mystery is this, that the potential is eternally in itself the actual. Process is in the appearance of things, for process is becoming, and becoming is of time.

Throned high above the dogmas of to-day stands the great figure of Evolution, to which we eagerly sacrifice the incense of our intellect. Will it, however, stand for ever supreme in its present form in the inmost shrine of the Temple of Opinion? Who can say? May not some newcomer cast it forth and take its place?

Evolution, in its officially worshipped form, is a theory that finds no place for soul in the universe. Is soul subject, then, to process as body seems to be? This can hardly be, for process is of time and time is of bodies, made by bodies, and not by souls.

Evolution belongs to a quantitative conception of things and is measured by bodies; but the universe is not to be measured by quantity, for it is immeasurable, and even physicists have to resort to qualitative terms in their attempted measurement of its mysteries.

And if this be true of bodies, how much more

impossible is it to measure a soul! For with soul there can be no such questions as how much or how little, how long or how short? Soul belongs to the eternal nature of things. It cannot be defined by body; it is known by itself alone as to what and of what nature it is.

When, then, we talk of an evolving soul, it is but ascribing the phenomena of ever-changing bodies to the nature of the soul. For when we consider the matter more closely, we find that we are still dealing with the phenomena of bodies, while the soul in its true nature ever escapes us.

And yet the idea of an evolving soul, at any rate in the form of a man working out his own salvation, and winning by his own efforts towards the realisation of his own Divinity, is one that appeals strongly to a certain grade of strenuous minds.

Such minds are strong for battle, and lust after the riot and din of the combat. For them the world is a battlefield, and not a magic circle of transformation; a school-house, or rather a penitentiary, where toil and labour alone are expected, and not a hall of initiation. They are the practical minds; they must be ever up and doing, must look after things themselves. They are the Marthas of the world; for them

the world is a place to labour in, and not for marvelling and wondering; for them the universe is not a miracle, but the result of ceaseless toil and labour; their God is a workman rather than a creator.

To such the opinion that the soul evolves, is a scientific theory; and so they set to work to evolve their soul. Their soul, they seem to think, is something they have, not something they are, or rather all they really are. What they evolve, however, is not soul, but body; and all bodies save one are prisons. No body, no matter how transcendent, save the One Body of the universe alone, is without its bolts and bars to fetter the spirit.

Yet even in writing this protest against the limitation of the immensity, we have fallen into error and treated of the spirit as though it were a something that could be shut in body. Such is the imbecility of speech concerning the mystery.

But this strenuous belief is not the faith of the many, it is the titanic daring of the few. The vast majority of mankind has ever believed that a miracle could at any moment be wrought.

And though it is true that the present phase of Western thought worships the idea of a universe of law—though for the most part in the form of some dull, mechanical scheme of

necessity,—nevertheless, the majority, even in the Western world, if we may judge by their acts, still believe in a God of wonder and miracle, who may at any moment give "unto this last" as unto those who have seemingly borne the whole burden and heat of the day.

Is this belief of the many, however, so utterly wrong? Is it not rather, if we look more closely, the belief of the will, if not of the intellect, in the immeasurable possibilities of the soul at all times?

The very follies of mankind prove this belief. For if we were absolutely convinced that the universe was solely a mechanism of law, and not a miracle of law and a law of miracle unto itself —if, in other words, we believed in the doctrine of unceasing toil under the law, instead of in the ever-present possibility of the miraculous freedom of the spirit, our heart would break.

For what is law in the way we usually regard it? Is it not essentially a symbol of limitation? And is not the universe illimitable, and the soul of man equally beyond all limit? Is not the soul in its very nature dowered with the freedom of the immensities?

Man, then, is free as to soul, but bound as to body. But his body is an image of the universe, and the universe is free, for it is the Image or Imagination of God.

If, then, man can will himself to know rightly his body as immense, nay as immeasurable and the encompasser of all bodies, he will grow like to the Image, and Bond and Free, Earth and Heaven, will kiss each other.

V.

HEIRS OF THE AGES.

THE 'Sayings of the Lord' are the fundamental deposit of Christian scripture, and are naturally believed by the faithful to be, each one of them in every particular, the authentic words of Jesus himself.

As such, they have always been held by Christians of every Church to body forth the inerrant inspiration of God Himself, through the one and only spotless channel of purity the world has known, the highest wisdom bequeathed to mankind, entirely beyond the reach of question or objection of any kind.

But of late years these 'Logoi' have been submitted to a stricter judgment than that of unreflecting faith; they have been referred to a tribunal that dares most straitly to question every tradition, even the most sacrosanct. The heredity of these Sayings has been most searchingly inquired into both objectively and subjectively.

On the one hand, they have been submitted to

the research of the busy intellect that spares no pains in examining every scrap of objective evidence, and in analysing every word of traditional record; on the other, they have been tested by the intuition of the soul that grows clear by the right use of reason, and by the innate love of justice that rules in the depths of the human heart, where dwells the Divine in man.

And, beyond all others, lovers of the Spirit should occupy themselves in such inquiries, believing as they do that all traditions of the Wisdom, without exception, should be purged from the accretions of ignorance and misunderstanding, which inevitably occur in every such human tradition, and which, in the case of Christianity equally with other great faiths, dim the brilliancy of the pure Gnosis of the Master, whose Presence breathed the breath of life into the childhood of the Faith that clings to His Name.

To some of us, then, who have specially occupied ourselves with the history of the origins of Christian belief, and have acquainted ourselves with the contemporary religious and mystical literature of the time, it has become a matter of high probability that a number of the 'Sayings of the Lord,' recorded in the canonical Gospels, are not to be regarded as original Sayings of Jesus himself.

These cannot reasonably be ascribed to the historic Jesus as their originator; but are rather to be attributed to collections of anonymous 'Sayings of the Lord,' in circulation among the adherents of some of the religious and contemplative communities of the time.

These Sayings were so called because they were held to breathe the Spirit of Wisdom, which had inspired their utterance, through the mouth of many a seer and prophet, whose name has been forgotten or perhaps never recorded; seeing that the Saying was not regarded as the word of the man, but as the 'logos' of the Spirit of Wisdom speaking through the mouth of the mortal, by means of the tongue of flesh.

Now if such be the historic *provenance* of a number of these 'Sayings of the Lord' which are handed on in the Gospels as the original Words of Jesus, it stands to reason that the only criterion of their spiritual authenticity is the simple test as to whether the Sayings in themselves are wise.

It matters little by whom they were spoken, seeing that this is entirely beyond the present science of man to decide, in face of the uncertain nature of the record; the sole test of their authenticity as Words of Wisdom is their own self-witness to their Divine origin.

There must have been a number of collections

of such Sayings, in those early days, adapted to the needs of the many communities that stood at different levels of spiritual consciousness, and whose ideals were transparently pure or tinged with the turbid stream of personal interest; indeed we have some instances of such collections in Hellenistic literature both prior to and contemporary with the origins of Christianity.

What was the first collection of Sayings adapted for Christian purposes, we have as yet no means of determining; but it is very evident that it could not have been the collection used by the third evangelist, for that is already glossed with certain crudities that could not have stood in any collection used by those who were in spiritual contact with the Master.

The antithesis between poor and rich, in the ordinary meaning of the words, which so strongly characterises the 'Logia' that 'Luke' had before him, indicates a popular socialistic movement —outside the mystic and gnostic circles of the Wisdom-lovers—that may have been originally based on some misunderstood Sayings of Jesus, but which had lost the true spiritual significance of the direct Teaching of the Master.

For it is hardly credible that a Master of Wisdom could have uttered, without any reservation, the words: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven"; or again that he

should have been so one-sided in his sympathies, and appalled by physical inequalities, as to have declared : "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

A Master of Wisdom must have known the mystery of poverty and riches, must have known why souls are incarnated into such conditions, must have been one with the great economy of all things, and have had words of comfort for the seemingly rich as well as for the seemingly poor, and certainly have refrained from setting class against class.

On the other hand, it is quite credible that, in communities who gave up all their earthly possessions and made themselves voluntarily poor, and so doing rejoiced in the names of The Poor and The Naked, as we know some of them did, such a Saying as "Blessed are the Poor, for theirs is the Kingship of the Heavens," might very well be circulated as a Saying of the Lord, as a Benediction of the Wisdom that constrained them to abandon all earthly things, and so strive to the goal of their high calling, the Royal Life of self-conquest.

When, however, the Great Propaganda began, when by the Authority of the Great Good Spirit, the Shepherd of Men, of Love Divine, some of the treasures of the Gnosis and of Spiritual

Initiation were thrown open to the many, it is easy to see that no few of the ignorant would eagerly seize on such Sayings as referred to the Poor, and adapt them crudely and literally to the hopes and fears of themselves—the poor, the slaves, the down-trodden, the outcast—without the slightest idea that their original utterance was involved in profound moral and spiritual meaning.

It is true that, from the limited point of view of our present ignorance, a life of enforced physical poverty, with the attendant horrors that we know so often surround the miserable existence of the poor, may—to the compassionate heart that sees only the misery, and knows not of the reason or purpose of this passion—in itself seem deserving, and most fully deserving, of commensurate compensation in a future state of existence.

Indeed, by many of those who regard nothing but the present life of the individual, it may be thought most comforting good news, an earnest of Divine beneficence, that the poor as poor simply should inherit great blessings in the after-state.

But man is a moral being and not an animal solely; and therefore whatever material or semi-material heaven or 'summer-land' there may be to compensate for physical suffering (and let us

hope there is a fair paradise to keep the balance equal), it is apart from the question of the attainment of Kingship.

So then for the lover of Wisdom the difficulties of such Sayings, in their received tradition, are not resolved by any compassionate hope that joy must needs follow physical suffering, and the riches of possessions in some heaven-world compensate for poverty in this world's goods. He can never forget that a Saying to be authentic must be a pronouncement of Wisdom, and Wisdom knows.

"That Mystery knoweth why there is poverty and why riches," as one of the Gnostic scriptures finely phrases it.

Wisdom knows all that has happened to the soul in the past, and why it finds itself now in conditions of poverty and now in those of riches.

Wisdom knows further that the 'Kingdom of Heaven' is not the reward of physical poverty, but of strenuous self-conquest and moral perfectioning.

And Wisdom knows finally that the 'Kingdom of Heaven' is no more 'within' us than 'without' us.

For Wisdom realises itself only when the Within shall have become the Without, and the Without the Within, the Right as the Left, and the Left as the Right; when Heaven and Earth

shall kiss each other; when Earth shall be exalted to Heaven, and Heaven descend to Earth in the Final Embrace of Gnostic Union.

However we may doubt the authenticity of any particular Saying handed on in the name of Jesus, of this we are sure, that there was a wide-spread Preaching, a Gospel, a Heralding of Glad Tidings, that promised the Kingdom as the reward of treading in the Paths of the Good Commandments.

Not only in the selected canonical writings, but in a mass of contemporary literature that has been excluded from the canon, there is repeated mention of this Divine Kingship, of which the Righteous are the heirs. The 'Inheritance of the Kingdom' is the reward held out before the eyes of the faithful.

It is evident, however, on all hands, that this phrase, the 'Kingdom,' was frequently misunderstood by the general Christians, many of whom regarded it as an ideal state of a semi-material nature, into which the rejected of the world, who stood not the slightest chance of attaining to any kingdom on earth, should enter on their decease.

That such an expectation was a potent incentive to the poor in this world's goods, and that it was marvellously effective in turning the thoughts of the many towards some shadow of spiritual things, and fixing their attention on an

ideal that rose superior to their present physical conditions, no one will deny; but that this was the immediate preaching of the Christ as a Master of Wisdom to his knowing disciples, not a few of us may venture to doubt.

The preaching of a future state of joy and peace and royal glory for them who believed, was a powerful means of bringing comfort to the unthinking; but among those who set before themselves the ideal of Wisdom, it could represent no real solution of the great mystery that faced them round on every side.

To such Wisdom-lovers the Sayings that appealed most, were those of the Spiritual Gnosis, summed up in the so generally misunderstood injunction: "Know thou thyself, and thou shalt be King."

Know, then, thyself, and thou shalt, by that same spiritual self-knowledge, regain the memory of thy Divine estate. Thou shalt be King, a royal soul, fellow-king in the heights and depths of Living Reality, together with thy brethren, the conscious Sons of God.

Here, then, at last, through successive strata of misunderstanding, we are getting towards the heart of the Teaching and Instruction. It is a question of spiritual knowing and understanding, of consciousness and being.

It is not a kingdom to inherit in any sense of

things material or semi-material, though all such things may be added; not a region there, in some heaven-world, as set over against a kingdom or stretch of territory here, on earth. It is rather a question of power and rulership, of knowledge and ability, of life and freedom in all regions, on all planes—whether this last term be thought to connote spatial extent of ascending degrees of subtlety of existence, or states of ever intenser being,—of power and ability, freedom and realisation in all natures and conditions, states and existences.

Indeed it has ever been promised to them who have attained the first stage of awareness, and so consciously set their feet on the path of self-conquest and self-gnosis, that they shall be heirs of the stored treasures of the ages.

"Ye shall be Kings with Me in My Kingdom," says the Triumphant One to those setting forth on the Quest.

This true Kingship is Masterhood; and to such a King the whole of the Royal Treasury is opened—even the things kept hidden from the foundation of the world, the sacred mysteries of the Divine City, that City of the Golden Gates; for entrance into it is by the Ways of the 'Sun,' and the Gates thereof are the mysteries of flaming stars we see in highest heaven.

Heirs of the ages! Such is the sublime

destiny of true manhood; for every son of man that attains thereto realises himself as conscious Son of God, and as such is sole inheritor of all things—"all in all, out of all powers composed," as Thrice-greatest Hermes declares.

But why should those who dare to believe such things, those who would be true lovers of Wisdom and strenuous strivers after Spiritual Gnosis, why should they put off the striving for the realisation of this Great Expectation to other lives, other states; thinking these things too high for them? Why should they for ever be *looking forward* to That-which-is, as though it were a thing of futurity instead of the one ever-present eternal Reality?

Such despair makes us for ever the slaves of the moment and faint-hearted renunciators of the heritage of the eternities.

The Kingship, the Masterhood, of which the Good News has been preached, is to be thought of neither as lordship over past ages, nor as succession to the garnered possessions of times that have been, nor yet as some future attainment of greatnesses that are not as yet, but as the actual *self-realisation of being*, whereby man *knowingly is* the deathless and eternal Æon of æons,—not of æons in the sense of long periods of time only, of ages simply, nor of æons as spatial immensities, but of æons as everlasting

realities, that neither the total of all times, nor the sum of all spaces, can truly manifest as they really are.

Behold the dazzling truth before us, the incredible Gospel: We *are* spiritually now and always this supreme Æon of æons, this Mystery of all mysteries, and only *happen*, as Trismegistus says, not to know it.

Heir of the ages, heir of the æons! What more overwhelming promise could be made to man in his passion? A true Evangel this, the best of Good News, a proclamation from the Divine that is and knows, to the Divine that is and does not know.

But this, the sublimest of all instructions, the most transcendent of all ideals, must inevitably seem so inaccessible to most, that they will not hesitate to accuse the handers-on of this teaching of blasphemy against their God and calumny against the unique transcendency of their Lord. They have never yet heard of the Man-doctrine, the chief of the Mystery-traditions, the deep Christ-lore.

But those who have had the good fortune to hear the doctrine, and who have not lost courage and been dismayed, but have gladly gone forward to learn more,—they should see to it that they do not delay, longing to pluck the many fair flowers of dazzling possibilities that border the

paths of the New Dawn of the Sun of Spiritual Gnosis.

To one who begins to set his feet in the paths of this Wisdom, new ways open up on every side, new possibilities, new states, new natures. He hears on all sides of the wonders of inner nature revealed in vision; he becomes, perchance, a seer himself.

New promptings come to birth within him; new feelings arise; new thoughts surge upward.

He thus begins to add the sensible to the sensible, to extend the world indefinitely on every side, within as well as without,—thinking, perhaps, at the beginning, that if he only add long enough he will attain the Æon.

But the Æon is not so reached; initiation into the Mystery is not so attained.

The Idea of ideas is not the sum total of appearances, but the One and Only Reality of all things—the That which makes them what they are, and also the That which makes them not to be what they appear.

But let us look at the matter from a somewhat more definite point of view. Those who have experienced the new power of comprehension which flows from that illuminating idea which is so inadequately called reincarnation, should be on their guard against taking a too limited and physical view of the doctrine.

To how many has not the thought of the possibility of the recovery of the memory of scenes from past existences been one of the most alluring and fascinating of day-dreams? Heirs of the ages; yes, heirs to all and every scene and happening that has been in any age! A wonderful possibility, an apparently entirely satisfactory accomplishment.

But in time, with some at any rate, the fascination of this thought passes off; for they begin to learn that the re-seeing of pictures of the past does not really add to the knowledge of themselves, for seeing is not understanding.

And so they gradually replace the longing for the gratification of this curiosity as to their old clothes and past homes, by the desire to wield rightly the *powers* and *qualities*, the *abilities* and *talents*, they have, according to this belief, exercised so imperfectly in the past.

They gradually learn to recognise that the 'craft' of recovering the memory of the scenes of past imperfections and failures is by no means an unmixed blessing; that on the contrary, if they have realised their moral responsibility, it is more calculated to take the heart out of them than to give them courage.

And so they recognise that the law of nature whereby they forget, is most beneficent, and that it is rash indeed to overstep its boundaries un-

prepared; that it is only when they have truly learned the lesson of life and won the victory, they can venture to face the past in all its immediacy with safety.

For, without understanding, the re-living of our old experiences is very dangerous, seeing that it tends to set up once more in us the passions we could not then withstand. For who among us is strong enough to face the past selves of his earthly existences in nakedness, in utter truth, or even the selves of his present existence?

Are we not even now constantly excusing ourselves to ourselves, turning away from the truth of our many imperfections, glossing our faults and apologising for our errors?

But on the Day 'Come unto Us,' we go naked to the Naked Truth. Then, we may well believe, have we to face the bare pure truth not only of one life, but of all the lives we have ever lived—not as spectators apart looking at pictures that seem to have little to do with us, but as actually all that we ever may have been.

And if the Mystery is not then with us, if the Great Initiator does not wrap us round in the Fulness of His Holy Presence, how shall we stand in that Day?

Therefore it is no cause of regret if we cannot thoughtlessly attempt to anticipate the time of

our accomplishment in this fashion, if we are unable mistakenly to try to become 'heirs of the ages,' in the purely literal sense of recovering pictures of the succession of past events. All our efforts should rather be centred upon recovering the experience that these past events have inworked into ourselves.

And if we cannot at the beginning get at the depths of this experience at first hand for ourselves, then let us seek to revive it by the most careful study of the garnered wisdom of the greater souls that have gone before us.

And in this some are blessed beyond others, in so far as they dare, in regard to this wisdom, to aspire to the privileges of world-citizens. They are men, and they venture to think that the recorded experience of mankind may be theirs without let or hindrance, if only they dare to stretch out their hands rightly to receive it.

For who is there nowadays to say them nay? Who can frighten them if they are really men, and not timorous counterfeits of manhood, the slaves of some special book-superstition?

Are not, then, the scriptures of the world, in which, if anywhere, the highest wisdom recorded by man is enshrined, theirs to read and ponder over? Are they not now at this very moment, if they choose to be so, heirs of the ages in this respect? Here, without waiting

further, have we an earnest of our Divine inheritance.

Why, then, delay? Why expect the bewildering gifts of 'psychism' before we dare to think we have entered upon this spiritual inheritance?

The most precious gift that man has bequeathed to man, is the record of the nature of his deepest experience. This is to be found in the 'scriptures' of the world alone, in which are treasured the Words of the Wise,—formulæ, so to speak, for the summation of the infinite series of happenings that perpetually attend the existences of mortals.

In the inspired Sayings of the Sages are the closest approximations of human language to the æonic mysteries of man's nature. In such truly inspired Sayings we find the nature of the eternities vehicled in temporal words, ordered by an intelligence greater than that of formal reason.

For scripture is not scripture unless it be of the Gods who write with human pens. Such Gods are Æons, and so the writing of true scripture is in conscious harmony with the plan of Great Nature that is being perpetually written out unknowingly through all men.

If, then, we think of the treasures of instruction that are ours for the asking, we are almost overwhelmed. For see how inestimably precious the

different nations and the faithful of the various world-religions regard their several special bibles. And then think, that we, if we choose to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, have all these priceless treasures of others open to us! We are thus heirs of the ages, indeed; the treasures of the world-bibles are already open to us.

But if we think of these scriptures as old, as of a past age, as of no immediate concern to us, adapted to people in other conditions and not suited to modern times, we shall be falling into the illusion of time.

For by scripture proper we do not mean history, or geography, or astronomy, or the arts and sciences of the time, which are frequently found intermingled with sacred writings.

Such purely human elements are accretions, and have to be removed before the Voice of the Spirit can be heard speaking out of the depths.

It is in such inspired utterances of the Spirit alone that the virtue of scripture is to be found; and this virtue is æonian and not of the past or of the future, but for all time and every moment of time.

And so it is that those who would realise themselves as heirs of the ages, should read the bibles of the world, not for a thousand and one

other things, but for the Great Sayings, the Vital Words that they contain.

These Words, these Logoi, are of the nature of the Æons themselves; for they are inbreathed by the Æonic Intelligence that is the Great Scribe of God Himself. These are the true Glad Tidings of Wisdom that with many voices tells of one single Mystery.

She proclaims to us men in our ignorance and abasement the Great Announcement which is also the Great Revelation:

Ye are Gods, Heirs of the Æons, the Ages that have been and are and are to come, for ye are in yourselves and of yourselves deathless Eternities, if only ye return Home.

VI.

THE MASTER.

PERHAPS no word in the whole range of modern mystical and pseudo-mystical literature is used in such a variety of meanings as the sacred name 'The Master.' And if I venture to set down a few thoughts on this transcendent subject, it is not with any insane desire of confining the heavenly ocean of its true meaning within the small earthly water-pot of my present opinion, but rather with the hope of encouraging those of like mind to cast away their water-pots, and boldly plunge themselves into the depths of what the seers of ancient Egypt called the Great Green.

THE MASTER—single and plural united in one perpetual blend of sameness and variety, one and many simultaneously, one in many and many in one. For surely at the end of the Path of Self-conquest there can be no Masters in any sense of separation, since all who tread that Path to the end, we needs must believe, become one in the One and Only One.

Masterhood may thus be thought of as at-one-

ment with our God within and with our God without,—one and the same God; for the mind of such a God works ever with the body of the God, and the body of the God ever with the mind of the God.

And this God is the Obedient One, in heaven and on earth, one with the Supreme Will, which wills to be one and the same by way of the Gods, and twain and other by way of men. So at least I would believe.

Man is subject to Fate; his God is one with Fate, and so is free. Man is subject to Fate because he is one of two—separate, apart, divorced, halved, for ever seeking his complement. He is for ever crucified upon the cross of the eternal opposites; and the passion of passions for man is the mystery of the creative energy which ever seeks to realise itself in the union of complementary natures.

As long as he seeks union without himself, as long as he goes forth into otherness, into duality, so long does he depart from himself, and make for himself limit upon limit to imprison his freedom in self-created bonds.

But if he turn back upon himself, or unto himself, and 'repent,'* and so consciously seek

* The Greek μετα-νοεῖν signifies a 'turning' or 'change' of 'mind'; in its deepest sense this means the whole man re-turning on himself to God.

union with himself, he becomes self-creative gnosticly,—no longer producing forms without and other than himself, for otherness to dwell in, and so perpetuate the chain of birth-and-death, or ever-becoming, but begetting living ideas within, children that are himself, perpetually self-productive modes for truth to consummate with the immensities of ever self-same meaning.

By these and such like phrases I fain would cast upon the paper some dim word-shadows of one great idea out of the many that can be grouped within the grand conception of regeneration, or 're-birth,' birth from 'above,' or rather birth 'back' into the self, or conscious involution, or better still self-generation,—as opposed to unconscious evolution, birth from another, birth into that state of otherness which characterises man as mind in separation.

This, I believe, is one way of indicating the beginning of the Path, the end of which loses itself in the immensities of Masterhood. He who is consciously upon this Path, configured ever in this mode, is a self-learner, a candidate for Masterhood.

He is beginning consciously to raise himself above the cross of life-and-death, accustoming himself to regard his 'sufferings'—his joys and sorrows on that cross—as a passion-play of

marvellous meaning and continual instruction, an unceasing self-initiation.

But in this sense initation is process; it is not consummation. Before the Great Day of the 'Consummatum est' can dawn, he has first, with the fire of knowledge and full realisation, to burn into the divine substance of his spiritual being the experiences stamped upon the inner plasm of his nature, by all the purposed words and thoughts and deeds of all the lives he may have lived, or all the deaths he may have died; he must consume, 'digest,' the 'passions' of the past.

These are the living offerings that feed the fire at the self-immolation of the Golden Hawk, the immemorial Phœnix, the man that rises from the ashes of his dead selves to become a conscious winged intelligence of the Great Mind.

And even then who shall say what mysteries remain to be consummated before final Perfection is attained? Who knows? Or who, knowing, can tell those who have not ears as yet to hear—ears of sense and mind in every atom of their natures?

But shall we err too greatly if we phrase it thus? A Master is a living key that can unlock the mysteries of the Great Man for little men. These mysteries can be unlocked in countless ways; they are not shut away by the Divine

Mind but by the little minds of men. Each man locks himself out from the great Presence Chamber of the universe wherein the heavenly mysteries are shown unveiled.

The locks are self-made, of a certain general type, that may perhaps in some faint way be figured by what we know as letter-locks—discs on an axis, lettered on their rims.

Our letters now are all confused, for we, forgetful of ourselves, have lost the memory of the Word that is our key. The letters of the Holy Name are not as yet set in their proper order.

It is the Master Hand that makes the spheres revolve in such a harmony that all the letters always spell the Name; and so the man is free, unbound, unlocked, and in the Presence of the Lord of all.

Or again, a Master, thought of as apart, may be compared to a key in which the harmonies of the Creative Work of the Grand Music-maker can be set. Each Master is, however, in reality the whole instrument in every part; it is our limitations that prefer this key or that.

Again, the Master may be thought of as the Holder of the keys, the Guardian of the mysteries of the Divine Mind; not, however, that he keeps the mysteries from the profane in arbitrary fashion, for such mysteries as these can never be

profaned, seeing that the Great Mind is the Great Body of all things as well. The mysteries are ever shown without in correspondence with the mysteries within; the manifest conceal themselves, and the concealed for ever show themselves in everything.

The Master is thus the means whereby the greatnesses of the without and the within are, in moments of sublimity, mediated for the normally self-profane; that is, for those who keep themselves without the Presence—for those as yet without the Presence wilfully, though all unknowingly they ever are within that Presence. The Master is the means whereby the too great power of the immensities is tempered for the healing of the spiritually blind, and deaf, and dead.

The Master is, therefore, the Straight Way, the immediate Direct Path from the Divine in God to the Divine in man. In Him no longer does deep call unto deep, but depth is united to depth.

And if this be true, and we are not soaring on the wings of vain imagination into the land of things that cannot be, then we must think of a Master no longer as a mind apart and a body apart—though the mind and body that in any single case have served as the final means of the great consummation, may still be retained within

the world of men,—but rather as the mystery kept hidden from the foundation of the world—the final miracle of man made God, the divinising of the mortal, or the apotheōsis of him who for so many ages has been content to wear the garb of the slave, that so he may be clothed in the robes or powers of the King.

But the powers of the true King, of the triumphant Christ, are not to be confined to the separate body of one single man apart. The King has power over all men, for his Royal Body is not the single body of one slave, as are our 'dead' bodies, but the whole body of humanity and of all that has gone to make that body what it is.

Every body is a corpuscule in the Royal Body of the Master, for he is the World made flesh as well as the Word made flesh.

But some will say this places the ideal of Masterhood entirely beyond all possibility of comprehension by ordinary minds. This is quite true; for the 'comprehension' of the Christ-mystery is beyond the grasp of the ordinary mind,—the mind in bondage within the body of opinion. The comprehension of this mystery is reserved for the true man alone, the mind set free and no longer 'a procession of Fate.'

But faith precedes knowledge, and faith can be gradually purified from the dross of false

opinions and finally turned into the pure gold of knowledge. Or again, to use another figure, there is a gradual ascent towards the light of comprehension for every man. And this is why we find the term 'Master' used in very various meaning by 'those who are in faith' and not yet 'in gnosis,' by those who know the Master as He appears and not as He really is.

One view of the mystery that has helped me somewhat to purify my faith, and to understand the naturalness of the many different opinions concerning the nature of Masterhood, I will endeavour now to set forth as best I can, though I fear I have as yet realised but little of its true meaning.

It is the doctrine, handed on by the Buddhist sage, Ashvaghoṣha, concerning the three 'Kāyas' in which the Master, the Buddha, energises. The Sanskrit term Trikāyam is generally rendered the 'Three Bodies,' or 'Triple-Body,' of the Buddha; but in Pāli *kāyo* frequently means 'deeds,' 'action,' and also 'faculty.' Trikāyam, then, might be more correctly rendered as the triple Work, Activity, or Energy of the Buddha, and so in a mystical sense as Embodiment or Person.

These Activities, or Modes of Activity, of the Master are technically called, in Sanskrit, Nirmāṇa-kāya, Sambhoga-kāya, and Dharma-

kāya, which are frequently rendered as the Body of Transformation (Nirmāṇa), the Body of Bliss (Sambhoga), and the Body of Law (Dharma), or better, of Reality.

In actuality there is but One Body, through which the Master Mind perpetually energises; but this Body appears differently to disciples, according to the various stages of their enlightenment.

At the beginning the disciple is still, and most naturally, wedded to love of form and person; and being so wedded and so bound, he must inevitably seek union with and give worship to that form, of all the forms he knows, which represents for him his greatest love, his source of highest inspiration and profoundest knowledge.

It is the commonest phenomenon of religion, in its mode of faith and devotion, that the lover worships the Mystery in one form; and even when the gnostic sun begins to shine for him, the habit of love of form, which has ruled the man in all that has hitherto been the best in him, is still so strong, that he cannot do otherwise than continue to seek union by the adoration of some one person, who is all the world to him.

And this is very natural, for it is by love that man has been evolved; the animal passions are sacrificed and sanctified on the altar of family affection. And so the mystery of the

trinity is perpetually revealed in marriage of every variety of mode, from the crude imperfection of little more than animal congress to what men call a perfect union of love.

But beyond this there are other modes of the mystery hidden from common knowledge. The perfect union of love of man and woman is not the perfect union that man shall know when he passes, from the fulfilment of all that separated sex can afford, into the inner court of the mystery, where he is made ready to enter into that ineffable at-one-ment with his eternal divine counterpart which is known to mystics as the 'sacred marriage' (*unio mystica*).

It is because a truly and vitally gnostic teacher has realised this higher nature in himself and is self-fulfilled, that a disciple loves that teacher with a love sweeter far than that of man for woman, with a new love which is like the best in the old, but transcends it infinitely.

The first knowing contact with such a perfected nature stirs in the man depths that have never been moved before. He cannot but love and worship and adore, for deep calls unto deep across the knowing nature that has been the means of bridging for him, for the first time, the gulf of his own age-long duality.

There may be many appearances of this thing being wrought in a man at second hand,

by means of one who though he has *sensed* the mystery, and has so been *started* on the quest (the first *initiation*), is still seeking consummation or true self-realisation.

But the bringing to birth of this gnostic change in another is only possible when the teacher is a true knower of the mystery himself; only such an one can in any appropriate sense be called a Master.

Even then, it is only when the teacher is continually a conscious self-realised channel of THE MASTER, that the name 'Master' can be used of him in its full sense. Short of that he may sometimes speak as Master, but more frequently as man.

In the case of non-physical contacts with such a teacher, however, the case is very different. For there is full surety of right reception of the fructifying stream only if the channel is perfect on every 'plane.' The soul is very hard to define, as say the ancient initiates of the Chaldæan wisdom. Dreams and visions and psychic sensings are of the soul and of the world of images; and contacts in the swirling 'watery' spheres are of waves that may take any form.

Many and great dangers await the adventurer on this sea of troubled waters, especially the curious seeker after knowledge; for here he

will find many teachers if he look for knowledge and not wisdom. Of these dangers and of the magical self-created illusions of the Way of the Midst it is not the place here to speak. The question before us now is: What of the Master there?

The power of the Master alone can still the waves of this sea. But, and if he still them at the disciple's prayer, in what form will the disciple see the Master walking on the sea? Will he see him in his true form, or will he see him in some form he loves?

Surely the Beloved will appear to the lover in the form he loves! But whence comes that form?

It comes from the disciple's own mind. The imperfect form in the conception of the disciple's mind is made full by the Presence of the Master.

Whatever form of Masterhood the disciple may worship, however insufficient it may be, crude and imperfect, it is fulfilled in marvellous clarity. Light streams through the beloved form, and an atmosphere of ineffable love bathes the worshipper's adoring spirit. It is the greatest reality of which he is as yet capable. The Master fills the disciple full to the limit of *his* (the disciple's) capacity of love and understanding and imagination.

But is that the limit of the *Master's* love and wisdom and power of transformation? By no means; the limit is the disciple's, not the Master's. The Master can so appear simultaneously to many, taking the form of each one's greatest love.

Marvellous and all-sufficient as this may appear to the disciple, all-joyful as he may be that such a vision has been his, it is often by no means so desirable an experience as is generally supposed. For the very fact of the intense illumination of that special form weds the man the more unto that form, and blinds him to the greater power of the Beloved.

He sees but one imaging-forth of the majesty, and knows not of the mystery of transformation that can translate its meaning into any form; for to know a thing one must transcend it.

But through that form the glory *has* shone forth, the bliss *has* been felt, the sense of the greatness *has* been realised. And so the disciple may now begin gradually to learn to recognise the Presence when he sees no form.

It is often a long probation before the candidate can be content to feel and not to see; for sight is the most potent fascinator of all the senses, and for most without seeing there is no believing. And so, too, in lesser degree with the other divided senses.

But when the divided senses are cheerfully renounced, as they must temporarily be, before the real sense of the Presence can come to birth, then begins the truly conscious realisation of contact with the 'Body of Bliss' of the Master.

When this stage is reached and the Divine 'formlessness' can be not only endured, but keenly delighted in as all-sufficient in itself, and there is no longer any longing for the form of the Beloved, a marvel comes to birth.

For as the man grows in wisdom and in power, nourished by the substance of this joy, he learns that this most blessed life streams into him through forms other than the one he loves the best; that the Master can use many forms whereby to manifest his love—not only all the forms within men's minds of Masters of the past and Masters of the present, but many other forms of men and even of animals and plants and minerals. All forms of beauty and of good repute become the means of pouring into him the fulness of his Master's bliss.

But even this is still a limitation imposed upon himself by the disciple's still unknowing nature. The true Body of the Master, the Dharma-kāya, the Body of the Law, or of the Truth, or of Reality, requires *all* forms of every kind for its full revelation. This is the final

mystery that veils the Perfect Gnosis of all Masterhood.

But no Master can raise this veil for any but himself. For he who enters in behind that veil *becomes* the Veil, by putting off, of his own will, all that he has preferred beyond the rest, and putting on the Body of all things.

It is through the Great Body alone that the Divine Mind can reveal its deepest mysteries to men. All revelations through lesser bodies and through lesser minds must necessarily be incomplete and fall short of the Perfection.

And thus we dare to believe that THE MASTER perpetually reveals Himself in everything, in lowest and in foulest things as well as in the highest and the fairest, as these may seem to us when judged of by our 'little' minds alone.

VII.

INITIATION.

INITIATION—what diverse thoughts and feelings are aroused by this word of many meanings! Few terms of deeper import occur in a mystical literature, few words of more pregnant significance are uttered by those who speak on mystical themes.

And yet, when we are asked what we mean precisely by this utterance, how difficult is it to answer with any precision. The word is used in so many senses that it seems almost impossible to discover its root-meaning, and therewith the beginning of a right understanding of the living conception that ensouls the heart of the matter.

It is, therefore, with much hesitation that I hazard a suggestion on so great a theme, with many apologies to those of my readers who may believe otherwise or be better informed, if, perchance, I should unwittingly say anything unworthy of their holy things; and yet with a fair confidence that the Gods like us to guess

at what is beyond us, and smile when we try to find out their secrets.

Historically, the idea of initiation is always connected with the institution of secret rites, rites performed apart (*secrete*), either in the *adyta* or shrines of the temples, or in some place guarded from the eyes of the uninitiated, those who were outside the fane (*pro-fani*). These secret rites were generally known as mysteries, sacred ceremonies and acts on which the initiated were to keep silence on penalty of death, and so called from μύειν—to close the mouth.

Philologically, the term 'initiation' is derived from the Latin *initiatio*, participation in the secret religious rites. In its root-significance, however, *initiatio* is to be referred to the simple idea of 'entering into,' or 'entrance into' (*initium*, *ineo*), hence 'beginning.' I would suggest that *initiare* in its fundamental meaning is thus 'to start,' and this is confirmed by a Mithriac ritual which uses the Greek ἄρχεσθαι, 'to start, begin,' as its equivalent.

How the term came to bear its later precise technical meaning we do not know, unless it connoted the 'entrance into' the only things that were really worth entering into. Even the Latins themselves had to confect a connection. Thus Cicero (*Leg.* II. xiv. 36) writes:

"Nothing is better than these mysteries, by which we are refined and softened from a rude and savage life to a love of our fellows (*humanitatem*), and by which we have been taught the *initia*, as they are called, that is to say, the true principles [*principia* = *initia*, foundations or beginnings] of life."

We must therefore suppose that to Latin ears, among those who believed in the high moral worth of the mysteries, the meaning conveyed was that a man had entered the ranks of the humanists, had made a beginning of true philanthropy.

The Latin Father Tertullian uses *initiare* as a synonym of 'to baptize' (*Monog.* viii.).

But it is not in Latin that we can hope to track out the true meaning of the idea; it is in Greek that we shall find the stronger traces. The most general term for initiation is τελετή, and 'to be initiated' is, as Plutarch tells us, τελεῖσθαι.

The idea conveyed by these terms is that of 'perfecting, completing, accomplishing, operating.' The initiated were thus the perfected, in Latin *perfecti* and *adepti*; just as in Sanskrit they are the *sādhu's* or *sādhaka's*, from the root *sādh*, to perfect.

But the most general term in Sanskrit for initiation is *dīkshā*, meaning originally 'prepara-

tion' or 'consecration for a religious rite,' from *dīksh*, meaning literally 'to wish to make oneself fit or competent,' a desiderative form of the root *daksh*, 'to be competent, able, strong, or powerful.' In the Veda *dakṣha* and *kratu*, 'energy' and 'intelligence,' are often found together as the two chief faculties of the mind.

But enough of philology. It is now quite evident that the root-idea of initiation is somehow connected with religious rites and with a man's perfectioning by their means, or making himself fit in order that he may accomplish such rites.

Now religious rites are in general rites whereby man is brought into contact with powers other than himself, with the invisibles; this has been always the general persuasion of mankind.

But initiation has not only to do with religious rites in general, which are performed publicly for all to see, but with secret rites which are reserved for those only who have been prepared. Initiation to mean anything must always be connected with the idea of secrecy.

Thus we have the *rahasya* or 'secret' of the Aupaniṣhad schools, and the *disciplina secreti* or *arcani* of Christian mystic tradition.

So far, our thoughts have been verging towards what is good and holy and pure, and keeping in the background the obverse of these

things. The tragical history of mankind, however, is replete with records of secret rites of almost unimaginable foulness, and no period of the world's history is known when evil is not found co-existing with good.

Indeed it is almost not too bold a thing to say, that the great passion of mankind is so conditioned that action and reaction are equal and opposite. So that whenever we remark in history an epoch of great spiritual activity, we find it accompanied with detestable practices, the very antipodes of the higher impulses.

It is, however, not the purpose of this adventure to dwell on the dark side, but rather to seek some solution of the question: What do we who are lovers of wisdom to-day, mean by initiation?

Now, in the first place, it is very evident that those who believe in the brotherhood of man, can seek initiation only into such mysteries as can perfect them in humanity or true philanthropy, as Cicero says.

It matters not what allurements of gaining knowledge for the sake of knowledge may be held out to us, we must ever refuse entrance into such circles if they are not founded upon the purpose of right thinking and good doing; in brief, if they are not ethically sound.

But I believe most of us will go further than

this and inquire more deeply into the matter. For we are already fortunate enough in having had made accessible to us the treasures of many of the initiatory lores of the past—that is to say, of the inner teachings of the great world-religions which have been given by the Providence of God for the spiritual education of mankind.

Initiation thus begins to have for some of us a very deep significance. We have already learned, or we could have learned if we had taken any real trouble in the matter, what is the nature of the spiritual life, and what are the boundary marks of the Path that leads us from ignorance into Gnosis, from man to the Divine.

We have already learned, or at any rate we have had ample opportunity of learning if we would only take the trouble to read, what are held by the greatest benefactors of humanity to be the means of self-purification, in preparing ourselves for the holy rite whereby we shall be received into the order of true manhood.

We have already learned, if we have had attentive ears, that the mystery-rites of human institution are at best but shadows of greater things, and that a man may never have been initiated into such rites, and yet have passed on to truly higher things.

And why is it that some of us are so per-

suaded? Because we are utterly confident that true initiation is a *natural* process. No man can give or withhold it. It is the fulfilment of a covenant that man has with his God, and none can say yea or nay but that God alone.

It is very true that there are many rites that instruct us concerning the nature of this mystery, and that are designed to quicken our intuition of the nature of the consummation, whereby we shall be united with our greater self and so reach unto true manhood; but these rites cannot of themselves perfect us.

They may, if they are performed by fit and knowing hierophants and brethren, draw us towards the veil of the holy of holies, but that veil we must raise ourselves, and then only when the voice of the Beloved calls us from within.

In other words, and briefly, initiation is a new start, a spiritual impulse given us; it is for us to 'seal' it.

There are still, I believe, holy rites performed on earth by true knowers of the mysteries, that is to say, by those who have themselves attained the grade of spiritual manhood, and perchance higher grades still, and who have authority in holy things conferred by Nature and by Nature's Lord. But even such rites I would fain believe are ancillary; they are the true liturgical co-operation of the Servants of the Lord, but not

the actual begetting, or bringing to birth, the *Fiat* or *Efficacia*.

Indeed it is said that he who has been prepared and purified, or rather who has *made himself ready* and freed himself from the 'world-illusion,' so stripping himself naked of opinion, is not made gnostic here on earth by those in body, but that, loosed from the trammels of the flesh, he passes to other inward rites of greater efficacy, where the mystery is consummated in the peace of perfect harmony, amid the unwearied liturgy of Nature's purest elements, and with the wise co-operation of the all-knowing intelligences of Mind, the Great Initiator.

But seeing that this initiation, the true conscious beginning of the new birth, is a *natural* thing, we can hardly believe that it is dependent upon any instituted earthly rites.

When the disciple is ready, it is said, the Master is ready—has indeed been always there though unrecognised by the disciple. When the candidate is duly prepared by self-purification and the discipline of self-knowledge, the Initiator is there—has indeed been always there, preparing the receptive nature for the implanting of the spiritual seed of gnostic potency.

But some will say: This is all so very vague and we have heard of it before; there is nothing secret about it. Initiation must be a definite

thing, given in definite terms, that could be distinctly stated, were it permissible to speak of such matters.

Let it, however, be remembered that here we are not speaking of the thousand and one formal initiatory rites that, in greater or less degree, symbolise the *natural* fact which constitutes the conscious spiritual new birth.

We are rather endeavouring to evaluate in some small measure the '*secretum secretorum*,' the 'secret' of the 'hidden rites,' the spiritual mystery that no earthly or psychic ceremonies can *reveal*.

These do but *veil* the mystery; it is the man himself who must raise the veil, for the mystery is that of self-revelation, and that self-revelation is operated by the inworking of the natural energy of his innate Divinity.

This energising of his spiritual nature can manifest itself to his 'waking' or 'dreaming' consciousness in manifold modes. Every man viewed from the standpoint of process in space and time, every man considered as a 'procession of Fate,' that gyrates in the circles of ever-becoming and re-becoming, for the ages of the many lives of separated existence which constitute the moments of the intra-uterine life of the true Man—has presumably in the storehouse of his greater memory picture on picture of

initiatory rites through which he has passed, either while incarnate in some earth-life, or excarnate in after-life.

At the moment of his great conversion, which is the beginning of his knowing conversation with his greater self, these pictures can, it is permissible to believe, live again a life of new meaning, and things that had previously, for the carnal mind, been of the nature of shadows and shows, tantalisations and insufficiencies, nay, that not infrequently had led to corruption and debasement, become intelligible in the light of the new dawn of the purified life and mind.

But the memory of such ancillary experiences, the bringing them through into the physical consciousness, is not by any means invariable,—so I have heard, and so it seems most natural to conclude.

On the other hand, the re-seeing of these and similar pictures may be the lot of many who are still without the mystery, and is by no means in itself to be taken as any proof of spiritual attainment. For the bringing of the pictures through to physical consciousness is dependent solely upon psychic susceptibility, which in itself has nothing to do with the development of the moral nature.

The fact of spiritual initiation is rather, one

may believe, conditioned by the ability to understand, interpret and evaluate such subjective phenomena and happenings. The true Initiate is he who stands in the light of knowledge, and who thus understands.

This or that picture, this or that happening, is of no importance to him; it matters not whether this or that appearance of himself proceeded or proceeds through this or that experience, or whether other processions moved or move through other appearances. What is of moment is *meaning*, and the intuition of meaning alone is the only knowledge that makes for wisdom.

And this being so, the reminiscence of certain selected pictures either of past or present experience is a matter of no great moment; seeing that the memory that is restored by this spiritual initiation is that of understanding, understanding in present consciousness — no matter in what direction this consciousness be turned.

It is the faculty of appreciating the true value of action, of happenings; it is the correct reading of 'history' and true use of 'logic.'

There are doubtless all kinds of what may be called minor initiations into knowledges of an infinite variety of psychic states, as there are initiations into every variety of physical know-

ledge, and perhaps no few of my readers may think that many of such knowledges are well worth the straining of every nerve to acquire.

I, for my part, however, have ever been buoyed up with the hope that there is a more immediate Path to Spiritual Gnosis; and it is to the treading of that Path alone, in order to reach and pass through the Gate of the Gnosis, and so become that Gate for others, a true Bāb, that I believe a man should dare to consecrate his real Will, and give his whole Being.

This does not mean to say that we should foolishly think little of formal sciences and knowledges and arts, but only that it is difficult to avoid the persuasion that, if it were intended these should be acquired through temporal means by all who would attain to wisdom, then the process would be endless, and hope of consummation would be indefinitely deferred.

I would, therefore, rather believe that there is ever open for all men an immediate Path between them and their God, and that it is only in respect to how far any knowledge can be held to throw light on this Path, that it can in any true sense be called initiatory.

We may add science to science, and knowledge to knowledge, but no process of addition of sciences or knowledges will ever equate with Wisdom; and the understanding and gnosis of

which I have been speaking is of the nature of Wisdom.

Wisdom is eternal and immediate; it is not logical, it is not historical or evolutional, in the ordinary sense of these words; it does not interpret one 'plane' by another 'plane': it spontaneously recognises itself in all things.

And it is this *knowing contact* with this Wisdom, I believe, that constitutes the *entrance* into Life, or the first great natural Initiation.

This does not mean to say that the consciousness of this contact is continuous. The contact, it is true, remains, for it is the permanent transformation of the deepest nature in man; but the retaining of such transcendent consciousness in the impermanent natures of the mixture is as yet beyond the power of the new-born Man-child.

That power has to be gradually developed, and the 'growth in spirit,' or the development of the power to retain the 'holy breath,' or spiritual consciousness, on earth, marks the stages of perfection whereby the Man-child grows into the stature of the Heavenly Man.

And here I would break off, though there is much more that one might venture to suggest, for the subject opens out infinitely, as do all the fundamental concepts of the Mystic Way.

I know that it is greatly daring to venture on the treatment of such high themes, and that one

risks to be accused of presumption for so doing; but my sole object has been to suggest how wondrous a prospect lies before us when we dare to contemplate the nature of the meaning of that word of power 'Initiation.'

The dim imagining of what may perchance be a minute portion of that meaning is, I confess it whole-heartedly, presumption. But as this glorious ideal is one of the fundamental presuppositions of the Deeper Life, as 'Initiation' is a word that occurs so frequently in mystical and pseudo-mystical literature, it is not entirely improper to say: "I think it may be somewhat of this or that nature,"—basing ourselves on the highest thoughts and holiest feelings that have been awakened in our better selves by the study of the scriptures of the world.

To me, Initiation, in its highest spiritual meaning, denotes a transcendent reality; it must be the necessary and inevitable consummation of my present studies and struggles. There is no higher satisfaction that I can at present imagine; for it must, in its very nature, transcend all that I can imagine and desire and aspire to, otherwise it would be no consummation or fulfilment.

It is to be the natural end of life in natural ignorance, and the equally natural beginning of Life in natural Gnosis. Its nature is to be immediate and not mediate. It is not to be a

progress through other 'planes' simply, but a unitary realisation of the meaning of action on all planes.

Whatever is less than this, I would believe that it pertains to some *form of initiation*, that still veils the reality of the real thing, and not to Initiation itself. These veilings are doubtless frequently most beautiful and reveal far more than any individual's guesses can hope to reach, but they cannot really satisfy. And I believe that true Initiation is satisfaction.

VIII.

A MEASURE OF WHAT WISDOM MEANS TO ME.

ANY attempt by an individual to appreciate justly the general worth of Wisdom, or Enlightenment or Spiritual Gnosis, must in the nature of things be doomed to failure, for such a general judgment of real value would require a knowledge, not only of what Wisdom means in the general scheme of things, but also of what it has wrought in the nature of every individual who has come under its influence.

No adequate evaluation of the true worth of Spiritual Gnosis can be set forth even by the best endowed individual, for whatever he may say is but his own single praise-giving, an appraisement that can diminish no whit from the praise-giving of others, or in any way appropriate their songs of thankfulness.

These have all to be blended together to form the grand total; they must all sing together to complete the great symphony of joy, the

heartfelt thanks of all awakened souls for the infinite variety of the Divine Wisdom.

Whoever seeks to determine the value of this ideal, can do so for himself alone, appraising it by his own standard, according to his own idea of what it is, and according to his knowledge of what it has wrought in himself.

If a man does not value Spiritual Gnosis for himself, he cannot value it for others. If, in the ignorant conceit of prideful patronage, he allows it may be helpful to A. or Z., but declares it is no good for him, he is not talking about Gnosis but about some false notion of it.

For true Gnosis is precisely that which is the most valuable of all things for all, seeing that it is the Wisdom that unveils the mystery of seeming good and seeming evil, to the utter satisfaction of body, soul and spirit with the state of things as they are.

I shall, therefore, in this adventure, attempt no more than to try to disclose a momentary glimpse of some small measure of what the value of Spiritual Gnosis means to me. I have already let the atmosphere of feeling in which my thought is bathed, in contemplating this ideal, be seen above.

The evaluation of Spiritual Gnosis for me is thus pure praise-giving to Wisdom. I have

nothing but praise for it; my difficulty is that I cannot praise it enough. I have no evil to say of it, for it is the energising of the Good; no criticism to make, for it transcends my judgment; no depreciation to offer, for it is beyond all praise. I am unreservedly enthusiastic on the subject.

Perhaps you may, in your wisdom, think I am foolish to be so enthusiastic about anything. But my ideal of Wisdom is 'absolute,' must inevitably be so, for it is that which will make me wise and free, truly wise and truly free—not wise and free as you or I may understand these words in our present ignorance and slavery, but really wise in ignorance as well as in knowledge, and free in bondage as well as in liberation.

For you really do not suppose I am so feeble as to allow any one else to define Wisdom for me, and impose his notion of things on my universe, play hell with my heaven, and make me weakly suffer the passion of an intellectual and spiritual martyrdom, when my Wisdom teaches me, as one of its first lessons, to be prepared at any moment to shift my standpoint and be ever readjustable.

No; even a babe in this Spiritual Gnosis is big enough to have a universe of his own without any outside interference, for a universe

in reality has no outside. His infant thought-control can wipe out systems in the wink of an eye, the instant they are perceived to be awry from the truth; his baby laughter creates new ones every moment he sings in greater harmony.

Oh—but you will say—you are not playing fairly with us. Gnosis, or whatever else you may call it, we know is this, that, and the other. We have read all about it in books by Mr. B. and Mrs. A.

It is quite true that it is this, that, and the other—and something else. But it is not true that you have read all about it in books by Mr. B. or Mrs. A., or that you can read all about it in all the books of all the Messieurs and Mesdames A.'s to Z.'s in the literary or illiterate world.

At any rate it is not my ideal you have read about, if you think you can snuff out my enthusiasm by your criticism of this book or of that, or even of this bible or of that. If you have read of my ideal, you have read of something that must inevitably take you out of yourself because of its grandeur and greatness. If you have ever come across it self-consciously (I do not mean if you have simply read sentences and chapters with your eyes and unreflecting brain), you too would sing its praises; you could not help so doing; it is the

natural result, and the proof that you have understood.

Whatever takes a man out of his little self and refunds him into his Greater Self, even for a moment, is the energising of Spiritual Gnosis in him. This Divine impulse may be conveyed by the understanding of written or the comprehension of spoken words, or without the mediation of words at all as we understand them,—by means of those winged intelligences who are voiceless for physical ears, but who speak the universal language of the soul.

And what are the value and meaning of this mystery? How can one appraise such wealth of meaning, such inestimable worth, when the Spirit of God, the Divine Breath, begins to inbreathe itself self-consciously in the essence of man's being? How shall we estimate this good in any terms of human valuation, when every such term is already exhausted in appraising the simple gift of Life, even in its mode of life-in-death and death-in-life, which men cling to as the most precious of all their possessions?

Let us bethink ourselves of the ceaseless song that Nature sings in praise of Life, of Life even in its known phases from plant to man, of the joy of Life when it courses through the physical

veins; and then let us think of this Life no longer as unknowing and sub-conscious, but as impregnated with the Light of true intelligence, and so bringing to birth within the essence of man a marvel, a being of a new nature, a man-god, of superhuman power and faculty, who of his very nature sings a song infinitely more wise than any man can sing, in realisation of the worth and meaning of the actual; not in praise of some selected good alone, according to man's limited view of what is good and what is evil, but in praise of things as they really are, a natural song that must be sung, once even the possibility of this meaning begins to be realised, and the secrets of the Divine Purpose begin to reveal their hidden presence in all things—good and bad for the dualities of bad and good that we call men.

You say, perhaps: This is not possible. I would venture to reply: It is inevitable; it is man's glorious destiny, foreordained of Wisdom.

We are not the cruel sport of a heartless tyranny, the victims of a callous cosmic inquisition, the senseless torturer of human souls, but nurslings of the Gods, and children of the Father of the worlds. How, then, can we sufficiently admire and praise such marvellous Forethought for our good, and wise Provision for our welfare?

And the Divine Purpose, Forethought and Provision is Wisdom.

You, perhaps, reply again: This is not of science, but of faith—the baseless fabric woven by fond dreams of soaring fancy, and far removed from any actuality of fact and of experience.

I would rejoin: I am not ashamed of a faith that puts all so-called science to the blush. Faith alone can remove the mountains of our present prejudices that encircle the horizon of our ignorance; spiritual faith is the precursor of Gnosis. This faith is that which makes us act rightly, and it is by right action alone that this supernal knowledge comes.

It comes not by thinking, nor by dreaming, not by fancy, nor even by meditation. Realisation comes by action; actuality is hid in action and is revealed by action.

Faith is compelling will; not belief in this or that creed, but the determination of man's being to terminate the illusion of his present crucifixion on the cross of the opposites, and so arise to a knowledge of the reality of the Great Passion which feels with all that lives and breathes, and to the intuition of the Great Drama in which One Actor acts through all the bodies in the universe. Will is beyond all pairs of opposites; within the pairs all is desire.

Such faith in the overmastering truth of man's potential divinity is not born of ignorance, but is already of knowledge. Ignorance cannot breed faith, it spawns belief; faith is of the will, not of the desire. It is that which makes us act without attachment; and action is the language of our God, the speech that Gods can understand in all its meaning, while we men can comprehend only so much of it as perchance dogs of human language.

My ideal has thus changed for me the values of many words. Once I cared little for faith, now I esteem it highly; once I cared much for knowledge, now I esteem it less.

But the faith I cared little for was not Faith, it was a false notion of what Faith meant, —the topsy-turvy notion that the summation of a series of beliefs would result in conviction.

But Faith is of another order; it is of the will and being, not of the intellect and desire; it is immediate and not dependent on time. So with knowledge; knowledge as humanly conceived is deduced and not immediate; it is an intellectual process, and not the expression of Wisdom in action, which is living Gnosis.

Wisdom once meant many things for me; indeed, it eventually came to mean so many that my reason saw no possible prospect of

ever containing them; their variety was so great that I became lost in the endless diversity of detail.

Now Wisdom means one thing only; but this one thing is not one of the many things; it is of another order. It is a will not to know but to be; it is the assurance that Gnosis is realisation. This faith is the death of conventional knowledge and the birth of Wisdom.

The more you absorb this Wisdom, or Spiritual Gnosis, the more it absorbs you. You cannot get tired of it; that is impossible, for it is perpetual refreshment, of the nature of ever making new again. It is the secret of the perpetual youth of the gods, the panacea of all ills, the divine elixir, the secret of the philosopher's stone.

How, then, shall those who have come within its benign influence, who are conscious of its holy presence, appraise so great a mystery? They cannot adequately value it, for even its possibilities are inestimable realities, while in itself it is the plērōma of satisfaction, complete fulfilment.

But if we would estimate it by considering what we were before we came to consciousness of its existence, and what we are now in this faith in its being, then we can calculate an

infinitesimal fraction of its worth in the terms of our present procession in Fate.

For myself, it is now difficult to realise the utter vacuity and meaninglessness of my life before I came to know of this Quest. I ask myself again and again: Is that dim memory of purposeless wandering and drifting on from day to day, which I conjure up as the picture of my youthful past before I heard of it, really my self? It is now less real to me than many a dream; it was indeed dream, not waking consciousness.

At first, when I opened my eyes, I was like a child without discrimination. I was hungry; there was food piled high on many tables. I wanted to taste all of it; I was a glutton or an epicure, which you will. I set to work to taste it mentally; I read ravenously, devoured anything I could lay hands on.

What an indigestion it was!—Lives of mystics and saints and 'adepts,' Indian philosophy and Buddhism, religions and mythologies of all kinds, magic and the occult arts, cabalism and mysticism and gnosticism, the mysteries and secret societies, spiritism and mesmerism and hypnotism, biblical criticism and heresies of all kinds.

I was young and inexperienced and was—starving! There were no Introductions, no

charts of the unseen world, no catalogues *raisonnés* of the best books to be studied. You were turned loose in the midst of it, and ate yourself out like a grub.

But even so, think of what it meant. True it was all as yet a chaos for me—but what a chaos! It was in some sort living substance to feed on, a chaos only in so far as I had not as yet the power of proper selection and discrimination, in the too great profusion of the banquet. But, even so, it was a foretaste of the good things of Home, which made the exiled prodigal realise once for all the utter emptiness of the dead husks of the conventional that for so long had been his daily meal.

It was the beginning of an absolutely new life, in which at first one was naturally enough a babe; but it was life, not death; waking, not dreaming. Gradually the powers of discrimination began to dawn; taste, the innate taste of the soul, developed from sampling the many dishes set before me, and I gradually began to select the purest forms of food, the greatest sayings and inner teachings of the gnoses and theosophies of the great world-faiths.

What was at first, in my case, an intellectual delight began gradually to take hold of my emotional nature. Of this side of the subject it is not becoming to speak in terms of personal

experience; at least it has never seemed to me to be so. To wear one's heart on one's sleeve appears to me to be rather a sign of superficial emotion than a revelation of the depths of true passion.

There is a natural hesitation in displaying to the gaze of the crowd the secrets of the shrine of the heart; whereas the opinions of the head are generally all the better for the rough criticism of the world, for they have to be either broken in pieces or hammered into proper shape, by strife and struggle with other opinions. But the tender thoughts of the heart, the loving hopes of the faithful spouse of the spirit, are not for any ears but those of spiritual relatives and friends.

And yet it is precisely in these same tendernesses and loves of the heart that the power of spiritual life is most potently manifested to self-consciousness. This power transfigures the whole nature; the formal mind follows after it, anxious to shape itself into the image of its love.

For it is the Power of the Father in the Mother that brings the Son to birth. It is the power of love within the formal mind that organises it from within like to the Cosmos of Great Mind, while the conflict of contrary opinions from without provides the right resistance for the moulding.

Indeed, it is not seemly to display the secret workings of the mystery within,—not seemly because no description can do anything but dim the beauty of the reality of the Divine inworking. For that inworking is the energising of Beauty itself, which transforms the unadorned and unordered nature into a copy of itself, the harmonious order and cosmic loveliness of God's own Son.

This living realisation of the meaning of Wisdom is not derived from books. From books we may intellectually grasp the theory; but for understanding theory must first be put to practice, and rightly acted out. The theory impresses upon us the idea; we then imagine or image-forth that idea in our minds; and so imagining, by sympathetic magic we feel the power; and feeling it, we act it out; and by acting it out we then, and then alone, begin to know in terms of truly gnostic knowledge.

But how is it possible to convey emotionally to others what such an apparently bald statement as this may mean to one who has experienced even a moment's duration of such ecstasis? How can anyone express on the surface of things the depths of meaning that such gnostic passion or spiritual actuality contains?

Far as I am from any pretension to the full achievement of such exalted ecstasy, I can never-

theless 'sense' so much of it as to make me utterly convinced that, if I could convey to another in a single flash a knowledge of all the books and articles I have written and of all the lectures I have delivered on this subject, it would not exhaust even the surface-meaning of what it is to me.

I know I have not as yet even begun adequately to express what it really means for me; I am as yet inarticulate in the true language of Wisdom, I can as yet only send forth cries and utter interjections.

The more I realise its grandeur and its power, its inestimable worth and its inevitable satisfaction, the more I am persuaded how utterly it is beyond any human power of adequate expression. And this must naturally be so, for the whole universe has been created for its expression, and for this purpose solely; how, then, can any small mortal with his human baby-talk say what it may be?

Those of my readers who have flattered me by reading so far, and who flatter themselves that they have matter-of-fact minds, will, perhaps, here interpose: All this is rhapsody and rhetoric; if you possessed any clear notion of the matter you could express it.

But is it really rhapsody and rhetoric; or rather is it not the calculated statement of the

fundamental fact on which my existence rests? It seems to me to be purely scientific in the best sense of that much misused term.

The whole universe expresses Wisdom, sings the praise of Wisdom; it is revealed equally well in the foolishness of men as in the wisdom of nature, to the sight of God and to those Blessed Ones who have pure vision.

"In Wisdom God created the heavens and the earth," and all that are therein. The Mother of all things is Wisdom, actually so and not metaphorically. Wisdom is the spouse and complement of God as Creator, the that in which the Deity fulfils Himself.

It is living ideas alone that grow and have the power of reproduction; and it is to the treasure-house of such living ideas, the priceless seeds of the Divine Sower, that the holy Quest for Gnosis and self-realisation conducts us.

The mechanical handing on of what others have written or spoken, without the power of transmitting the living spirit of the thinker or the seer, is trafficking in barren or dead ideas. This is not truly human gnosis, for there is no conscious wisdom in it; it is the work of elemental transmission solely—an excellent thing in itself, exceedingly useful, but not the work of self-found men. Spiritual Gnosis must have life

as well as light; the one without the other is either chaotic or barren.

All the teachings, all the instructions of Spiritual Gnosis on countless problems can be summed up in one living idea, the most potent seed of all in the great granary for planting in the fitly prepared mind of man. And this master-idea is that man is potentially Divine.

This seed of Gnosis, this power of growth or perfectioning in the Wisdom of God, is the true man himself realising himself in the soul of his purified nature,—which means a nature capable of sensing all opposites in a balanced state that transcends them, and thus supplies the ground of Spiritual Knowledge, or Gnosis of the clarified or justified mind.

And here I break off, having perhaps said little I have not said before, and having fallen far short of what I desired to write, and yet with the conviction that if I tried again and wrote it otherwise, I should still feel the same about it, even if I succeeded in giving my sentences fairer form and my ideas clearer expression.

For Wisdom, then, I repeat, I have nothing but praise. Spiritual Gnosis must be lived to be known; for living it, one lives wisely; and living wisely, one reaches true happiness; and reaching true happiness, one sings songs of thankfulness to Him who by His Wisdom has made all things.

I do not, however, for one instant suggest that it is because of the passing through these high stages that I praise Wisdom; I praise Wisdom because I cannot help it even from the bare imagination of what it means.

IX.

ADUMBRATIONS.

SUPPOSING a man could see nothing but shadows, what conception would he have of the beautiful natural world of form and colour in which we live? How strange would be his misconceptions of the objects which delight our eyes; what queer abortions would he not bring to birth compared with the full-formed children of our developed senses!

And yet, for those who see the soul of things, we men, in spite of all the marvel of the sights of our fair world, live in a shadow-land. The things we see are shadows—things aslant, askew, dim outlines, out of all proportion, compared with the realities that live in the true sun-world —the world of perfect spheres whose heart is in the centre of all things.

Or to put it another way. Ordinary human consciousness is as it were a kind of prenatal existence compared with the state of perfected manhood—the flower of humanity.

This flowering of humanity is, to use another

figure, the bringing to birth of a new consciousness; it is a new dawn of life and light. Of this other consciousness there are at first adumbrations, foreshadowings, only. And as the characteristic of this new conscience is recognised self-consciousness, the birth makes itself known by the ability to 'common-sense' the objects of the five-sense world as adumbrations of the modes of a great soul, and by the faculty of contemplating ideals as premonitions of the energies of a great mind.

But this great soul and this great mind are not essentially other than man's true self. They are the fulness of which the new creation is the germ. These adumbrations of the glories that ever are, are foreshadowings of what the man himself will be when he has reached perfection.

Not only are the natural objects of our five-sense world adumbrations of the glories of the one-sense world—the mysteries of the soul of things—but all the great mystery-rites, all the great ceremonies, are in some way the foreshadowings of these greater things; and all the great myths and stories of the world are in some sort premonitions of the powers that perfect man shall wield, and of the glories that shall adorn him in the greatness.

We, then, who are still confined within the

consciousness of normal man, are, in the light of this great consciousness, babes yet unborn.

It is difficult to find true words to name the various grades of the greater mysteries—the stages of the new birth, new childhood, and new manhood; for we in shadow-land can deal with the adumbrations only of great things—shades of the mysteries and the perfections. We must, then, be content to evoke the realities by the names of their shadows.

As in the lesser mysteries of human birth, and growth and death, and re-becoming, men were taught to recognise the shadows of greater things, so in the greater mysteries of regeneration there is birth and there is prenatal existence. But how much more glorious is the greatness and freedom of the latter than the smallness and servitude of the former! If there be birth, it is the birth of perfected manhood; if there be growth, it is the expansion into infinitude; if there be death, it is the death of death, and the birth of immortality; if there be re-becoming, it is the power to become all things at will.

For those who are being made ready, for the aspiring candidate, the one who has put on the white robe, and whose heart longs for release, who is clothing himself in purity and whose face is set above, his normal human consciousness may be taken in some fashion as a faint

adumbration of the prenatal existence of a human god; the darkness of the night of the soul is beginning to be faintly illumined by the first rosy beams of the rising sun.

It is the dawn of the Christ-state in its most human phase. But if we here use the term 'Christ' we should remember that this word conjures up a single great adumbration only, one of a number; and we should therefore be very careful not to limit our intuition of this sublime state by thinking in the terms of the Christian adumbration of the mystery too exclusively.

Perhaps some of my readers may object to the frequent use of the term 'mystery'; but I know no more efficient name, not only for the sacred operations designed to bring man into contact with super-human things, but also for beings and states of being beyond the normal world of man and its inhabitants.

Ordinary human consciousness, then, may be said to provide the conditions of prenatal existence for one preparing to attain perfection.

It is in such conditions of formal consciousness that there is operated in man what the Christian Gnostics called the 'enformation according to substance.' This is achieved by a further outpouring of the Divine Life which floods his being. But what is called the 'enfor-

mation according to gnosis' is a later stage; the birth of mind requires breath, and only when the Great Breath is active in him, is he born in mind, in the Great Air. Then, and then only, may he be said to rise out of his tomb, or be born from the cave or womb, and breathe the true Air of Cosmos. He transcends his personal limits and frees himself from the loving bonds of the Earth-Mother.

But even while the mystery of the 'enformation according to substance' is being accomplished, whereby the substance of man's body is transmuted into the nature of the cosmic elements, there is, it is said, a gradual sweeping away of all to which the consciousness of man has previously been accustomed. There is a purification, and the habitual ceases; the things we have grown used to are transformed.

This does not, however, mean a change so great that speech with mortals becomes impossible; but it means that speech must be in the language of adumbrations—of figures, symbols, allegories, similitudes, parables and myths —the shadows of the things that are, but which cannot be expressed or explained in the too unplastic medium of normal human speech.

And this language of adumbration is a fitting mode of speech to veil the mysteries, and at the same time to reveal the meaning of the

mystery to those who sense its operations in their inmost life.

For in this new prenatal existence, it is not so very otherwise than with a human babe; though one is small and the other great, one is surrounded by the mother's womb, the other is encompassed by the vault of heaven.

An unborn babe, it is said, becomes sensible of many things that it afterwards sees. Before birth it is surrounded by fluids and forces that to the perceptions of which its *body* (body, not mind; it has no mind till breath comes) is then capable, are said by some to have very distinct correspondences with what it *sees* when it is born.

Being born, then, is not quite so much of a surprise to a baby, at any rate not so much as one is inclined to think, according to this view of the matter; for it is said that the air and trees around, the currents of electricity and magnetism which set up thrills in its body, have already all had their exact correspondences on what we may call another side of things, and it has thus experienced *similar* (not the same) feelings before, while in the prenatal state—not to mention the great sweeps of emotion its body has experienced through contact with its mother's passions.

How powerful these latter may be, can be seen

in cases of great fright, when the body of the little one is born either stamped with the mark of the cause of terror, or disfigured, or even entirely maimed.

These exceedingly important phenomena should enable us to deduce many adumbrations of greater passions and emotions, when applied to man considered as a babe unborn within great Mother Nature.

The vast sweeps of Nature's emotion — the thunder and lightning, and air, and sea, and sun, the emotions and the ecstasies caused by these — are the thrills of real passions transmitted to us through the emotions of our Mother, within whom we dwell. And it is along this line that one who is beginning to be 'enformed according to substance' should expect premonitions of greater feelings, for such passions are the links between the prenatal and postnatal consciousness of greater manhood.

The Great Mother is stirred to emotion, and the thrills of her passion reach man through Nature, through the four elements. As man begins to rise in the scale of being, as he nears the time of birth from his Great Mother's womb, it is first along this side of things, and not by way of the 'planes,' that he should expect to contact the great world.

This way of birth does not mean a flying away from earth and soaring to new stars, but rather connotes consciousness of a new condition of matter, or, from another point of view, a new aspect of the same objects. It is by linking himself on to Nature and, so to speak, trying to breathe with her, that man can best draw the experiences of this consciousness down into his finite body.

These mysteries seem to have been better understood in antiquity than they are to-day, perhaps because form had not so greatly dominated life, mind had not so greatly divided substance. Thus in a theurgic ritual which hands on the tradition of the innermost secret of the Mithriac Mysteries—the mystery of the new birth, or birth in immortality, the true apotheōsis—we are told that, prior to his birth into the cosmic Air, the candidate for the Eagle-grade, who will then be able to soar into the pure Æther and gaze unwinking at the Sun as it is, first of all invokes his 'perfect body,' which lies hid in the substance of his imperfect mortal frame. This is a quintessential body of pure elements, and not a compost of the impure mixtures of earth that we call elements.

But in these mystic adumbrations of greater things the terms are always changing; for within the growing man, so to say, there is

a Christ-child, and again within the Christ-child a grown Man.

Further, what is taboo among men with their bans and ordinances, is not taboo among the gods in their freedom. The so-called immorality of the gods is immorality only so long as we persist in regarding them as men. That a man should wed his mother is regarded as a crime against nature, and rightly so in the realms of diversity; but the myths of old, the adumbrations of greater things, tell us that in god-land the son eventually becomes the husband of his mother.

So, too, is it with the human-god stage; the child-god born of Mother Nature, when grown to his full stature, weds his Mother, and Nature becomes his spouse or complement or fulfilment.

Even in lesser things, in the adumbrations of the greater or cosmic mysteries, there is mystic intercourse with the elements of Mother Earth and their ensouling life. The mediæval legends of the marriage of the philosopher with the sylphs and undines will here occur to some of my readers, for thus alone it was said could these nature-creatures become possessed of an immortal soul. The alchemystical philosopher gives of his reasonable soul to the instinctual life of the elements, and they in their turn give him a new body, or rather they transmute the substance of his body. All of which may be read in the

strange story of the Comte de Gabalis — or Master of the Kabalah; for Cabbale and Gabble are twins.

And so, from another point of view, when a candidate in these greater mysteries is preparing to become a *mystēs*, he has, it is said, to marry each of the four elements. Such an one is supposed to have finished with the normal side of things (that is to say, to have done with using them in the normal way); he has done with the 'planes' as they are generally understood by climbers of the ladder. He no longer desires to look at the universe from the 'plane' point of view, where matter and form are divided up according to certain fixed laws. He has now, it is said, to contact a quite new condition of the same thing.

For, as the old *logos* has it: "By earth we earth perceive, by water water, by air air, and fire by flaming fire." And if this be true of the mixed elements, as the ancients declared, we should have here an adumbration of the nature of the pure simplicities.

Therefore in the new birth it is necessary to begin with the true elements; for the consciousness is no longer to be dominated by the spheres of fate, the planes of form, but is to begin to obtain a life-view of the universe, where everything is divided up quite differently into what

we may adumbrate as earth-things and air-things, fire-things and water-things.

To begin to sense these four it is necessary to turn the mind away from the normal point of view of the world, away from all one sees on the formal planes; for these four deal with the unmanifest and not with the manifest, with the hitherto unnoticed and not with the habitual forms.

Again, as to substance, to humans earth is more manifest than air; but to some beings water is more manifest than earth, to others fire is more manifest, and so on. And by 'manifest' seems to be meant what is apparently more actual.

Before a neophyte of Nature's mysteries can be trained to see another whole species of manifestation, he has to marry the four elements, and so bring to birth within himself new 'centres' on to which this new aspect of manifestation can link itself. But these new 'centres' are not distributed in certain parts of his body; they are rather, so to say, within the atoms of his substance.

This substantial linking on to the feminine side of Nature is, compared with the true new birth, still a prenatal stage; but it is the beginning of a new creation. Nevertheless the old remains, for it has well been said that a Christ

is as it were a new 'keynote,' who makes everything mean something different while still remaining the same.

This is, however, again but an adumbration of a truth that beggars all description. This is not the potential god-man in the prenatal stage bathed in the golden spiritual life of Mother Nature; but the operative creative Christ, whose great work is to turn the golden negative life (substance) into positive life, when it becomes 'red,' the colour of the blood of things (spirit).

The way of the mystic is the way of return, of regression. Therefore it may be said that at the top of the animal kingdom—that is to say, at man—everything as it were turns round and goes back again.

Thus there is a stage of super-manhood which may be said to be in direct communication with the vegetable kingdom, and another following it which may be said, in the language of adumbration, to talk through the mineral world. Hence such sayings as: "Ye are the salt of the earth."

If a Christ surrender his soul to the world, the world will surrender its body to him. The animal world will do so by becoming his complement, his counterpart, his bride; but he will wed the sacred animals and not the beasts of earth, and the sacred animals are connected with

the living ideas of Great Mind. The vegetable world will surrender itself directly, by becoming him—wheat, vine, tree; for the body of the Christ is of the nature of the bread of life, of the true vine, and of the master-tree of the whole Paradise. The minerals are the jewels on the breast-plate of the high priest. They are the powers of the purified reason; for the breast-plate is the *logion*, the oracle, as Philo tells us, and the Christ is a living oracle or speaker of words of wisdom.

So much, then, for these few adumbrations of greater things.

X.

THE HEROIC LIFE.

For long I have been seeking a satisfactory name to express the grade of being beyond man; and by this I mean the x in the ratio:

As animal : man : : man : x.

We have here an ascension of grades, steps in development. As animal and man are intimately commingled, so are man and x; the man-plant grows in the animal soil, the x-plant in the human.

Or to start a stage further back; that which sleeps in the mineral, wakes in the vegetable; that which sleeps in the animal, wakes in man; that which sleeps in man wakes in x.

Or yet again; that which is passive or negative in mineral, is active or positive in vegetable; that which is passive in animal, is active in man; that which is passive in man, is active in x.

Looked upon from the standpoint of substance, these stages may be regarded as three successive outpourings of life; considered from the standpoint of consciousness, they may be symbolised

as three light-sparks. Yet they are not really in themselves three separate natures, but intensifications of one and the same mystery.

The out-pouring is also an in-pouring, it is a vivification; the spark is rather a flame, a tongue of fire, a creative energy.

What, then, shall we call this *x*? Perhaps the most convenient name yet suggested is superman or over-man; but if we use this term we risk being thought the propagandists of some novelty, because of Nietzsche and his *Übermensch*, whereas the idea is as old as the record of mankind.

If, on the other hand, we use the sacred names of christ (the anointed) or of buddha (the enlightened), we are a stage beyond our *x*. For *x*, according to our scheme, compared with the perfected buddha and christ, should be as animal to man.

In Christianity there is, as far as I know, no distinct name for the stage of the "christ being formed in our hearts"; in Buddhism there is one — namely *bodhi-sattva*, he whose essence (*sattva*) is of the nature of enlightenment (*bodhi*), but who is not yet perfectly enlightened or *buddha*.*

* This is strictly correct only for the *bodhisatto* (Pāli) of Hīnayāna Buddhism; the *bodhisattva* (Sanskrit) of the Mahāyana has a somewhat different connotation.

The phrase angelic man, again, is not clear, though it has been used. Angelic in this sense is the Christian parallel of the Greek daimonic. In all men there is latent an angel or a daimōn; and by daimōn is of course meant not a demon, in the perverted Christian theological sense, but that genius or daimonic soul (*daimōn* = the knowing one), which, in the case of Socrates, "prevented him when he was about to do anything" not rightly.

For the Greek religio-philosophers the daimōn was an intermediate between gods and men; and the god in man was for them of the same nature—though necessarily regarded from a somewhat different standpoint—as the buddha or christ.

We should here of course distinguish between natural gods and human gods; that is to say, between exalted and excarnate beings who have not passed through the human stage, and those who have won their freedom or divinity from the state of man; and it is perhaps to be regretted that we have no simple terms to mark this difference.

Perhaps, however, a distinction might be drawn by using the Sanskrit term *deva* for powers on the substance, or nature, or mother side of things, and the name angel for powers of mind, or consciousness, or of the father side of things.

But who is to guarantee the adoption of such a convention?

The term *daimōn* was used by the Greek theologians for both a stage in the descent of essences and a grade in the ascent of souls. There was also another name they used which in some ways paralleled the latter use of the word daimōn.

Those who did great things among men were called heroes, and they were believed after their death to watch over mankind.

Their chief characteristic was that they had done things greater than ordinary men. They had acted according to the behests of a higher order, according to the promptings of a soul greater than that of ordinary mortals. They had been the means of liberating greater forces in human life, setting up greater activities, living heroically. Their souls were of a daimonic or kingly order; they were kin to the gods.

As the term hero has not as yet, as far as I am aware, been used in this sense in modern mystical literature, I will venture to incorporate it in the title of this adventure, mainly with the object of calling attention to its existence. Doubtless the whole of my outing could be phrased to suit this title; but as I no more desire to stereotype the term hero than any of the other names, I shall vary the use of terms according to the context.

The term hero, however, is useful as suggesting deeds of true valour, and right will, in the sense of acts of value or worth, or virtue or power; it suggests the warrior who fights for what is best in us, and who in this sense is not opposed to the saint, but is rather he who expresses and completes the contemplative by the practical (or heroic) life, the ancient philosophic meaning of these terms being understood in a somewhat wider and deeper sense.

With some there may be sudden and wellnigh overwhelming experiences of this greater consciousness, but at the beginning the change may be looked for in less heroic experiences.

According to a phase of mystic teaching, and by comparison of animal with man, when animals become men they give up or lose many of their capacities as animals. And so we may conclude that at the beginning those who aspire to become super-human, will have to let go some of their human capacities.

It is a mistake, though perhaps natural for those who are learning of these greater things for the first time, to jump in imagination right away to the abstract essence of consciousness, so to speak, when they think of that which surpasses human consciousness. But this universal consciousness surely transcends the initial stages of super-human consciousness.

Super-human consciousness is more practically thought of as another *mode* of consciousness. Some imagine that they will arrive at super-human consciousness by adding indefinitely to, or multiplying indefinitely, their own consciousness. They get an idea of super-human consciousness as something spread out all over space; but this does not seem to be getting nearer the reality or actualising the possible; it is rather getting too abstract.

It is more practical to begin by imagining, by analogy, that super-human consciousness when it first comes will be more limited than the human, but quite other.

It indeed stands to reason that the use of the new power will be very limited and infantile at first. By analogy with the lines on which we are thinking, it is quite conceivable, for instance, that at the beginning, when functioning in this other consciousness, the man will lose very largely the faculty of sustained thought; he will lose a large amount of discrimination as regards normal things.

Even as humans have not the senses of the body as alive as animals, so will, presumably, the 'senses' of the mind be less alive in super-humans than in men. Ultimately, doubtless, the super-man will develop such faculties and such interests that he will not miss these

human workings of the mind, but at first this will presumbly not be so; in the elementary stages of super-human consciousness he will miss these, and to a certain extent feel the lack of them, and will not compare favourably with normal men in some respects.

But something, it is said, must be given up, at any rate for a time, in learning another and a different mode. It is very difficult for the *mystēs* to think thus subtly about this new mode of operation, or to resist the temptation to inflate himself in imagination, or spread himself out in idea. It is difficult to catch the first glimpses; more difficult to understand their significance; most difficult to *see* the entirely new world that opens up around him (the *epopteia*).

It will not, however, be another different world, any more than a man lives in a different world from the animal. But in that consciousness the scope of his mind, his sensations, and activities will entirely change; there will be new meaning and interest in everything.

This, however, does not mean to say that along normal lines he will become abnormally clever; for the growth of mind proper in this new mode is a slow process. Nevertheless, from the very beginning the man should strive not to

allow himself to be overwhelmed by the intensity of his new feelings or 'passions,' or be carried away by the ecstatic nature of his new experiences. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that he should turn his attention very powerfully upon every real ecstasy he may experience, and try to understand its inner bearing, and to refrain from magnifying its greatness or importance. For its importance lies only in the extent to which it can awaken in him the understanding of the workings of consciousness. *What* he sees or is able to record is a detail; to understand *how* he experienced it is the main thing to strive after.

And when it may be that the body becomes such that these experiences are frequent, the man on the path of this Gnosis should not so much grasp after the information of great interest and importance that will pour through—it is there so many stick—but he should rather strive to get hold of the working of the mechanism of consciousness, to understand how it operates and its relation to normality.

This does not mean to say that the struggle should be to get control of this ecstatic consciousness—for that is not possible at first; because of its very nature it will control, and should do so. But the endeavour of the neophyte of this way should be to try to be able to transform

himself, so as to pass through the great change without losing the link.

Now the human mind is as it were poised between the calls of objective Nature and the impressions from within of its Divine prompter. The true hero is ready at any moment to sacrifice his life, not only in the ordinary sense, but also in the sense of the life he is living. One of his chief characteristics is the power of standing aside from himself, the ability to get outside and apart from, not only his body, but also the interests of his mind and the attractions of his senses. His ear is ever attentive to the admonitions of his Divine prompter

One of the first features of super-human consciousness, therefore, is the appearance, or introduction into the field of experience, of this daimōn, which at one time, when the man is human, will seem other than himself, at other times will be himself.

When this change of consciousness first comes about, it would seem that the man becomes possessed very strongly with the idea that he is being watched by an inner power. And so it has been said that to super-men the actions of their normal human body all become part of a drama—that is, as it were, a play before a spectator or spectators.

From this point of view no acts are exactly

spontaneous; they are all purposive or done 'purposefully,' with definite regard to the onlooker or witness. No action is related to the little thinking mind; it is not done for the pleasure of the self, as with normal folk, but all life is further related to this Great Spectator, or Higher Self, and all activities are done for the purpose of a definite communion with the Witness, in order, as it were, to express ideas to him.

In free animals actions are the immediate result of sense and instinct; they do not think and then carry out their thoughts into action as men do. With super-men, then, not only should their actions be the result of their own thought, or rather the expression of themselves, but at the same time every action should be 'purposeful,' and bear definite relation to this Great Spectator or Onlooker.

And so in becoming a super-man, in living the heroic life, a man becomes as it were an actor on a stage, and every act has two relationships—one to himself, and one to the audience or the spectator or the world—and the one to the world is generally the more important; but the perfect blending of these two attitudes of the active or practical life should constitute a well-developed super-man, just as these two well blended, in normal life, constitute a good actor.

It is good drama only when action is not too studied, and yet when every act is full of meaning, that is to say, is in very intimate relation with the spectators; but at the same time every act should be quite *natural*, that is, have intimate relation to the human self as actor.

In super-humans, therefore, action is not so much the studied mechanical *result* of thought, any more than in a good actor; nevertheless, as all his actions should be natural, they are thus intimately related to his mind and body. It is rather that the relation of the action to the Great Spectator, or the meaning of the drama, becomes so apparent to him, that the little actor immediately, almost unconsciously, throws his whole body and mind into the acting out of this meaning.

It is more that he sees with his higher sense what is wanted for this expression of meaning, and uses his ordinary mind to guide his body in the detailed acting of these 'symbols.' He does not so much think, then act—that is really two acts of the man; but rather these two acts become one. It is, therefore, more as in the animal; his mind becomes a sort of instinct again and guides his actions, while he, the real super-man, is keeping and feeling himself constantly in touch with this great spectacle and its Onlooker. So does the man get outside

himself; and so does the idea of instinct return in a very expanded form.

And who is this Onlooker or Witness? It is, as has been said, the Higher Self. This Onlooker may, from one point of view, be said to be the sum total of all the true definite Ideas with which the man has been able in his many lives to furnish his world—that is, make part of himself. It is the true Mind of him. It is therefore, in a sense, his own universe looking at him and watching him; and by universe is here meant the scope of his true creative consciousness.

It is true that all this has been summed up in the phrase "Thou God seest me"; but this for many is too vague for definite realisation. Let us rather imagine all the 'creations' of our true Mind alive, alert, full of mind and capacity; imagine these all watching us, and then imagine ourselves actors on a stage with our own creations as our audience.

In the heroic life, then, it is that portion of the man that is already free from Fate, or Karma, that is prompting him to act according to cosmic principles, is prompting him to make his whole life a great celebration, or act of holy communion; or to make his life a living symbol and example.

It is these acts of power that stir the cosmos;

or the great Cosmic Mother, who surrounds him, is made conscious in a particular direction by his activity. The Great Mother waits for the man to speak symbolically. The Cosmic Mother is stirred by the meaning in his activities, and she answers, and her answer is to bestow more power on him; and this power lifts him further out of the Bonds of Fate.

And this means that it is not the mortal man who is strengthened, but the true Man, the Higher Self, who is the real prompter to definite action—that is, action according to plan and symbol, and scheme, or cosmic order.

The more man's little person is mastered by Fate, the weaker and less significant is his Great or Cosmic Person.

Or again, to put it in the figure of a flexible rod fixed in the bed of a stream; the more we can demand power from the Great Mother, by right action, the more does our pole of personality, which is depressed by the great flood, rise above the Waters of Fate, and we become gradually powerful in, or rise into, our 'Air body,' or Spiritual nature; until, when this pole is more in Air than Water, the great change comes about that is called super-human consciousness. The central point of this pole is then above Water; and the pole is our Great Person in Air, and our little personality in Water.

The heroic life, therefore, is that which causes us to withstand the flood of Saṁsāra, the Ocean of becoming, of birth and death, and so to centre our consciousness above the swirling of the Spheres of Fate.

XI.

ON THE TRACK OF SPIRITUALITY.

It is a curious fact that though the terms 'spirit,' 'spiritual,' and 'spirituality' occur perhaps more frequently than any others in mystical, religious and philosophical literature, there is no consensus of opinion as to their definite meaning. Various traditions use these terms, or else terms which are most conveniently thus rendered into English, in various ways. If, then, an attempt is made to bring out some points of interest in considering the scope of 'spirituality,' it is not with any intention of formulating a precise definition, least of all with entering into controversy, but rather with the view of encouraging inquiry into the deeper nature of words we employ so frequently.

In the first place, spirituality in the modern use of the term connotes something fundamentally other than materiality or even substantiality; and it would also seem that spirituality must differ essentially from intellectuality. There are of course spiritual intelligences, but in consider-

ing the root-meaning of words we should clearly differentiate spirit and intelligence.

Now spirit is generally supposed to be at least as universal as matter; we should expect to find manifestations of it everywhere. But spirituality can hardly be the same thing as spirit; and so, for our present purpose, it may be taken to connote the manifestation of spirit in man. Indeed, many writers seek to confine 'spiritual' to those who have established themselves on the path of sanctity or sainthood, and are progressed in ethical perfection; but in considering spirituality in general, we should, I think, be wiser to give it a more extended meaning, or allow it a wider area of manifestation, for in itself it would seem to be a 'natural' thing.

The first idea that may perhaps be associated with such spirituality is trusting childlikeness—not childishness, but childlikeness; and therewith a supreme delight in everything, freshness; seeking for new ideas and experiences in everything around, with faith and trustfulness; feeling quite sure that they are all going to prove delightful, and have been specially placed there by one's 'Father in Heaven.'

In such natural spirituality, it would seem, there should be an entire absence of fear of every kind. There is nothing to dread, for everything

around feels like a part of oneself, and you cannot very well feel afraid of your own hands and feet.

For true natural spirituality there would be no fear even of earthquake or tornado, or of any of the great passions of Nature; the true child of the spirit would feel, on the contrary, even special delight in Nature's emotions. There would be no fear of death; for in spirit man is fully conscious of immortality. In the truly spiritual there would be no fear even of torture or any prolonged physical illness or horror; for such an one has such absolute assurance of bliss, that even if these things were allowed to happen to his body, he would know that his mind can be made so to match circumstances that the wretchedness and misery of such sufferings cease to dismay.

Spirituality would thus seem to connote fundamentally a will that wills with the Will of all things, quite content to run along the lines of Fate, whatever they may be, though not to drift with the tide; it is manifested rather as an ever-readiness to embrace everything that comes, and that, too, not as a duty but as a pleasure—to embrace all joyously, because there is unshakable faith that the world is really, as it were, bliss-side up; and the blacker things look, the more painful their appearance, the more joy will there

be in riding over the waves. Spirituality is god-like.

For the spiritual, then, there should be, one would think, no taking life too seriously; it would seem to be rather a sign of youth in spirituality to be so dreadfully serious over everything, as many are, though one may generously recognise in them the high promise of future greatness.

But though it is unwise to be too serious, this does not mean that we should be indifferent. The man of spirit should be in earnest and eager, but should not attach such cosmic importance to results. He should, so to say, be more 'breezy.' When the storm rages he draws vigour from the elements; he may feel out at sea in a great storm, but he knows with surety that, however the winds may rage and blow, however high the waves may rise, he is in a safe boat, with a Pilot whom he trusts utterly.

Or, putting it in another figure, just as the saints of old called themselves athletes, so is spirituality, as it were, the running of races, when it does not matter, as far as things down here go, whether you win or lose; you only take pleasure in the running of them. You must sit loose, and be detached.

From another point of view, of course, it is of the utmost importance to the man that duty

should be done and truth be learned. That concerns the evolution of the man; but it is, so to speak, another side of things to natural spirituality, for evolution is man-wrought. This is the concern of the man and not the concern of the god in man, whose nature is fundamentally that of spirit.

Spirituality for man is, as it were, a tuning of the mind to the music of Fate, the great Harmony. It is the attitude of the inmost Man, the Divine Spark, as it is sometimes called, towards the daily surroundings of the life of the outer man; and the result of assuming this attitude, of identifying oneself with the One who ever stands rightly, who *naturally* adapts Himself to every great change, who can instinctively shift his centre of gravity and keep in perpetual equilibrium, is not only calm, but joy and merriness.

A result of the realisation of this instinctive co-feeling with the source of all adaptability, and therefore of perpetual bliss, is, as it were, a bubbling over with life. When this enlivening takes place and continues there is great joy in the whole nature; the happy individual feels at his best, feels in a sense as though his surroundings showed him off to the best advantage, feels as though he were in his true and proper place. It is instinctive with him; as though he were

working like a spirited horse, not knowing or caring where he goes or what the result, only enjoying the outing.

Worldly-wise people may think it very stupid not to try to understand, but such natural spirituality does not seem connected with mental comprehension as that is generally understood; it seems rather to be connected with a still more fundamental understanding.

This spirituality may be said to bring about an inner relation between the man and his God which is beyond the comprehension of man as man; it connotes rather such absolute confidence in his Charioteer that he does not want to be troubled with knowledge; he only desires rightly to experience and enjoy, and so with every such true act an inner understanding comes about between him and the universe, or rather cosmos, which is beyond all comprehension of men of little acts, the slaves of Fate.

From another point of view, we may perhaps regard spirituality as what has been of late repeatedly referred to as 'cosmic consciousness,' in the sense of that which truly transcends the separated individualistic mode of consciousness; or we may equate it with what in India might be called ātmic consciousness, though of course we are here speculating on its simplest manifestations, or adumbrations, only, that is to say,

endeavouring to discover some ways in which we may be led to feel after it.

If this great mystery dawns upon the greater horizon of man's mind, or his most fundamental nature, a new understanding of a like fundamental nature comes to birth. In such a state, it is said that if he gaze upon or contemplate with right attention any person or any object, there is a transformation of the man's whole substance, or essential nature.

With his lower consciousness, he, as it were, hears a sudden sound, and sees a momentary flash, and then his whole being understands what it wanted. Only there is no physical sound and light; these are but figures to help the true imagination. There should be no materialising of the operations of the spirit, no profaning of the mysteries; no thinking that it is just as it were the sudden flashing of a microscopic electric spark, or the striking of a match in the dark, a splutter and a flash!

It is rather a feeling of being spiritually intoxicated as it were by the object; and thus a sudden change which may be physically adumbrated, by saying that the feeling is that of the object being inside oneself or oneself in it; there is momentary unconsciousness and then an awakening to consciousness and understanding.

The mystery of Fate, or Karma, has always been the greatest riddle that man has had to face; it is the 'that' from which he has to 'free' himself. Many have sought to escape by regarding the world as that from which one has to flee, as being a thing evil in itself. "The world is very evil," says a Christian hymn, echoing the constant tradition of the early saints. "Brahman is true; the world is false," runs one of the great sayings of the Vedānta. But the deepest philosophy of the spirit can hardly rest satisfied with this naïve dualism. There must be some other solution, some wiser way of regarding things, some true reconciliation of the "antitheses of knowledge falsely so-called," some true Wisdom.

Whatever that essential Wisdom may be, it surely would help somewhat if we were to regard Fate as in some way the complement or spouse of spirituality. Or rather let us say that one whose aim is realisation, should unite himself with his Fate around, should join himself unto his Destiny, go forth boldly and joyously to meet it; he should not flee, not be overtaken, not be emmeshed as a craven in the Great Net. He must marry his Fate in mystic union, before his spiritual nature can come to full consciousness in him, before the God can be born.

This thing in itself is natural, not artificial;

it has nothing in itself to do with virtue—*that* is on the side of evolution. And so it is, as has been often remarked by the observing, that drunkards, or even callous sinners, have enjoyed momentary touches of spirituality; but these are momentary only, and the reaction brings regret and remorse. Spirituality with the properly prepared brings with it delight in everything, full satisfaction, without any regret or remorse at any moment and without any doubt.

But this freedom from doubt, this utter sureness, is very different from conceited self-confidence; where that exists it is not due to really spiritual experience.

The spiritual consciousness affects the whole nature, and it has therefore a mental side or mental effects as well. These effects may be best seen in the broadening of the sympathies; in seeing one's neighbour's point of view as clearly as one's own. As spirituality becomes more constant, not only must there be no feeling of being apart from any one, but no one must be allowed to feel apart from us; indeed the presence of the truly constant in spirituality has such power of union and co-feeling as to override all other people's eccentricities, and bring about sympathy in spite of them.

In spirituality there is no question of human

superiority, and among the spiritual the bond is that of friends. In human friendship also friends are of necessity our equals; if we once think ourselves superior to other people, the immediate result is the loss of friends. We may have many followers; but they will never take the place of friends.

There has always been great difficulty in speaking of the nature of spirit, for there is danger of much misunderstanding attaching to it. For instance, if it is found urged upon those who are neophytes of the spiritual path, to be in earnest but not too serious over results, many of those who follow this adventure will understand the wisdom of the injunction; at the same time they will at once perceive the unwisdom of urging this upon the unprepared, lest it should take from them their eagerness. The many will try hard if they believe heaven and hell depend upon it; and of course in a sense heaven and hell *do* depend upon it; and people who never rise out of their personal interests, spend now (for there is no need to put heaven and hell always in the future) their lives alternate days, as it were, in heaven and hell; and so it *is* of the greatest importance for them to be serious as to results.

But all this is not spirituality in the sense in which we have been using the term. People

who think 'heaven and hell' at once fall out of the spiritual, if by spiritual we mean really free. Those who very seriously (and generally with tremendous show and a most earnest and laudable desire to get other people to follow them) set to work to do right in order to reach heaven, are surely still confined within personal interests.

With the birth of true spirituality the whole point of view alters. People who try to set the world right, and not themselves right with the world, are still confined to the personal point of view. Spirituality, which is of the nature of freedom in its deepest mystic meaning, that is to say, co-operation with the Divine Will, should bring with it a sense of the fitness and beauty of all things.

But to descend from the heights; let us take what may seem to some a very unheroic example, and seek for a manifestation of spirituality in most ordinary things, for the spirit is no respecter of persons or things; a spiritual person can enjoy a game of cards without needing the excitement of money, can enjoy races or contests or activity without troubling whether they be followed by a prize or not.

If, then, there be any who say that such a doctrine, such a cultivation of what we may call a 'breezy' attitude of mind, would take all the zeal and interest out of them, and they cannot

see why they should be keen about the thing itself, without any reward, then it may be known at once that in these respects they are without spirituality.

For a spiritual person is one who has motive within himself, apart from the attraction of the prize—or heaven, and apart from the fear of loss—or hell, or any sense of shame. He is self-motive. He acts rightly because he understands with inner natural understanding; he works because activity is the natural thing; for the Divine Sun of his inmost nature brings with its rising a great desire for activity. As Kṛishṇa says in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (iii. 24):

"These worlds would be destroyed if I did not perform action."

This is the Great Game of Deity, the Sport of Viṣhṇu, as it has been called, of which the worlds are the counters or the cards, the playthings of the eternally young Bacchus; and so with the true Man and his worlds. Therefore also should the little man here in this world 'play the game.' Being unattached in daily life means just this playing at life-cards without money or reward. Enjoying a good game and not minding if you lose, is a sign of spirituality; something very different from being indifferent or hating cards.

True spirit is motiveless, for it acts immediately, without thought of past or future, instinctively.

Self-motivity would therefore seem to be a fundamental characteristic of the spiritual nature, and we should learn to respect it, and be on the look-out for its manifestations even in its crudest forms. For instance, in young people, the youth who delights in life and being 'up to anything,' of course in an innocent way, is showing forth an aspect of this characteristic; indeed, in ordinary parlance we speak of his being 'spirited.' On the other hand, the youth who never moves till he has carefully calculated, and is quite sure that it is going to be worth his while, is showing forth quite another characteristic; he lacks buoyancy. We can note this vital buoyancy more readily in youthful people. For older folk such buoyancy is far more difficult; they are far more complex, and we have to look deeper.

If, again, we seek for similar characteristics of spirituality in the mind along these lines, we shall, I think, find that wit is a sign of spirit. This is why wit is such an enormous power, and why the opportune use of it will save many a difficult situation. It is, as it were, the direct power of the spiritual mind playing in the normal mind; indeed in French it is rightly called *esprit*.

It might be suggested, in the face of so much solemnity, that it would be well for those who wish to teach and lead and live by the use of

their mentality in a spirited fashion, that they should cultivate wit. It is a *siddhi*, a power, though it has been omitted from the solemn lists. It sharpens the mind; it is a refreshing motivity in language.

A spirited person is, then, in a certain measure, a spiritual person, using the term spiritual of course in the widest sense, apart from theological preconceptions.

Wit is vicarious atonement in language; and vicarious atonement is the harmonising of the disharmony of others by the power of a spiritual presence, which brings about the great transmutation; evil is absorbed and transmuted into good or equilibrised.

Wit is a manifestation, so to say, of something that happens apart from argument, and is so full of life that it is capable of upsetting everything. It is a power outside reason. In itself of course it is an indifferent power, and if we have a witty opponent he can carry the whole house with him without any consideration of logic. This is, then, how one aspect of spirit works; but it is partial spirit manifesting under limitation.

The above are a few notes on the margin of a great subject which may be of interest to the unprejudiced. The endeavour has been to seek for some indication of spirit for the most part

in ordinary life and ordinary people, free from pietistic and spiritistic presuppositions. Nor have I attempted to soar into the sublimer heights of the spiritual life, and evoke the shades of the great souls to lead us with them, in imagination at any rate, through their great experiences, but have endeavoured to keep on earth as it is called; for spirit is common to all planes, it is in itself as near earth as heaven. The spiritual man has nowhere to lay his head, for he has all places; he has no mansions, for he has all mansions; he has no temple, for he has all temples, as the Ritual in the Hymn of Jesus has it.

Spirit is common to all men; but the consciousness of it, and much more the self-consciousness of it, is another matter. The consciousness of it makes a man super-human; and the full self-consciousness of it constitutes the Master.

XII.

GUESSES AT WHAT TO EXPECT.

One of the most pregnant of the great sayings that foreshadow the nature of the mystery of the Divine, is the utterance in paradox: "He is greater than great, and smaller than small."

Divinity transcends all size and quantity, exhausts all numbers. The problem of mediæval scholasticism: "How many angels can stand on the point of a needle?" has here no place; for the answer is: "None and All."

Perhaps at no time in the history of the world have instructed minds been better prepared in the preliminaries for realising the great truth hidden in the above paradox, than they are to-day by the labours of science.

The telescope has revealed to us immensities of space that stagger the imagination, and hugeness of bodies and of systems that bring man to his knees, in wonder at the vastness of the universe and the gigantic atoms that circulate in the limitless ether.

The mind is thus loosed from its bonds of size, and calms itself in the sure conviction that there is an endless series of immensities, the very first terms of which exhaust the resources of even the most sensitive plate for stellar photography.

On the other hand, the microscope has made visible the regions of the minute, and brought into the field of man's physical sight myriads of the countless millions of small lives that people the tissues and fluids of our bodies, and has opened up new worlds where there was previously nothing visible.

The searching analysis into what had been hitherto regarded as the final units of matter, has forced from the intellect an almost unwilling confession that minuteness is endless, and that the mind in following the logical sequence of its analytic nature loses itself in the infinitude of smallness.

Here, then, stands the mind of man between the twin immensities of greatness and smallness, amazed at the mechanical revelation of the hitherto physically invisible.

But has he really plunged into the depths? Has he done anything else than bring new 'otherness' to birth in that which was once the 'same' for him, because it was the invisible? This continual forthgoing is in itself no deepening

but rather a more extended pouring of himself over the surface of things.

There are as yet few signs that these new discoveries are being used for what they are manifestly purposed; namely, to teach man about himself and his relation to the Divine. The grand intuition that every single thing in the universe is designed for no other purpose than to teach man concerning himself, is the special persuasion of the mystic. This does not mean to say that man as he is, is the centre of the universe. But it does mean that man contains potentially in himself the whole universe; and therefore he has a depth within that can partner the immensity without, and from this divine congress will be born the power of conscious self-revelation which will end the mystery by becoming the Mystery.

It is a comforting reflection, not only that there is nothing common or unclean when embraced in the purity of the Divine thought, but that the lessons we have to learn may be as easily read in the commonest objects as in the rarest phenomena; the one thing requisite is to have our attention aroused in such a way that we become absorbed in the interest of the study.

Now interest is that which concerns us, something that profits or advantages us; and the

greatest interest is, therefore, that which profits, or benefits, or makes better, the permanent element in us; or, perhaps it were wiser to say, that which enables the permanent element to come into clearer manifestation in us.

Let us, for instance, consider an *amœba*. The name comes from a Greek word signifying 'change' and 'exchange,' and has been chosen to designate a microscopic *proto-zoon*, that is, a primitive life, or the simplest living plasm, the most typical class of which exists in all fresh-water ponds and ditches. It exists as a tiny mass of protoplasm, and moves about and grasps particles of food by means of protrusions of its body, or self-made tentacles, which are called *pseudopodia* or false feet; and the food thus seized is engulfed in the body by any portion of its surface (there being no distinct mouth), and so absorbed. Because of its thus continually changing its shape, it has been called the *proteus animalcule*.

The myth of Proteus, who was fabled to be ever changing his shape, came originally from Egypt. As Homer has it in the *Odyssey* (iv. 384):

"Hither there comes and there goes Old Man of the Sea, whose words are e'er true—Egypt's undying Prōteus."

What, then, can we deduce concerning ourselves from such an apparently insignificant creature; what lesson can we learn?

The amœba is possessed of life and instinct but has no mind, as man has mind. We therefore cannot learn from it concerning mind as we understand mind in man; but man is not mind only, and therefore what it has to teach would seem to be an object lesson to arouse an intuition of, or an exercise in guessing at, the nature of the normally subconscious in man.

Small as it is, it may be a living symbol of greatness; for the mind of man has the power of magnifying and decreasing size, of expanding the little into the great, and of enfolding the great into the little.

What, then, if we were to compare this small life, this primitive creature, with the stage beyond mind as we generally know mind in man? The amœba has as yet no mind developed; so also, it might be said, the spiritual consciousness has as yet for man no 'mind,' for mind, as we know it, is the power of multiplicity and complexity of form, and in many ways spiritual consciousness is a consciousness of the one and only One.

But when we say 'the stage beyond mind,' we should not think too definitely of degrees of dignity, and allow ourselves to assume that in

itself one is higher than the other; both are admirable in themselves, both are working out their own mystery; neither is afore or after the other. They are simply other.

The consciousness which we have called spiritual, might be termed unitary. It is the state of consciousness a man gets to when he leaves personal mind behind; and by this is not meant that mind is abandoned as a thing of little worth, but that for a time a man leaves it to experience a unitary 'otherness' that is set over against the manifold 'othernesses' inherent in mind, and so to realise what on his return, when interpreted in terms of mind, will be a 'sameness.' The mode is that of an outbreathing and an inbreathing, or, if it be preferred, an inbreathing and an outbreathing. It depends on one's prejudices which order is preferred; the wise man has no preferences and can see either way.

Now many learners of these mysteries expect that the moment they get outside their own minds—that is, what they have hitherto regarded as their minds—they will immediately have some enormously extended consciousness of the same kind; that practically the man who can rise out of his own mind is immediately capable of knowing the ideas and mind-workings of every other person.

But when a man gets outside his mind, when he rises above the limits of dimension, he immediately loses every sort of consciousness connected with mind and object. The whole world of separation is gone, the whole world of moving objects is gone, the whole world of separated individuals, struggling and fighting against each other, is gone; and at first he gets to a state of consciousness in which, like the amœba, he feels only himself and his own living processes.

He is only conscious of himself and living processes which seem to be himself. He becomes the one and only one for him, a sort of cosmic amœba, or a beginning, or an essential unit of consciousness on the one and only side of things.

He is no longer using mind, or the power to ray forth; he is not seeing mind, so he ceases to see, know or in any way be conscious of that scope of consciousness which normal men use; but he awakes to a new field of consciousness, and becomes aware of those processes of life that are *common*—common, not special; catholic, not individual.

He becomes aware of life pulsing in blood; he becomes aware of breath, which is a new activity of the true mind-worlds unconnected with dimension.

He thus becomes aware of many things that the modern mind can in no way understand, and so sets down to superstition. But it has well been said: "Superstition is outside reason; so is revelation. The first is below, the second is above. The first is a reflection of the second." Even so the amœba is really a reflection of the Living One we are groping after, and not the Living One a figment of the imagination deduced from the proteus animalcule.

So that all these 'superstitions,' that have come down to us from days when blood and breath circulated in the plasm more strongly than mind played in it, may have new meaning for us when interpreted according to the gnosis of natural revelation.

That lost art, which has been mechanically—and therefore superstitiously (in the sense of remaining over without explanation or understanding)—handed on in the making of talismans and amulets, and in the use of symbols, may, by an understanding of the life in blood and breath, be some day rediscovered in higher modes. And we might even say that the man who possessed the consciousness we are in search of, would become aware of all natural talismans and amulets and symbols, and of that side of the universe whereby objects which appear dead become alive, and yield up their meaning,

a meaning quite unconnected with normal persons or minds.

The magical belief that if you have a man's name written in his own blood, then you hold that talisman by which alone a man can be held, is of course a 'superstition.' But in what else is the Name of the man written but in his blood? The Name in ancient Egyptian wisdom was the man's Great Person, his Higher Self or Mind; and this is written in the life in his blood, the greater life-impulses that lead him to action; for the writing of the Name is the expression of himself in his character, that is, in characteristic acts.

It is, then, of the utmost benefit to try to get a clearer idea as to what to expect, when we succeed in getting outside our normal personal limit or mind. We should not expect to *know* everyone else's *mind*. It is not a case of multiplying minds together when we get outside our own minds; we do not immediately arrive at the L.C.M., least of all at the G.C.M., of all minds, as many may suppose. We first have to lose ourselves before we can find ourselves, as a word of wisdom has it.

If, then, we can compare the little with the great; with our amœba before us, we may not be so far wrong in 'guessing' that we first of all return to what may be symbolised as a sort of

mucilaginous 'jelly-fish' kind of consciousness; our attention is directed towards life-pulses, rather than impulses.

So that, if by chance we ever attain to the condition of that state of consciousness and still continue to expect mind-visions, it will mean that we will get no consciousness at all, for there will be no mind-visions.

There are many doubtless capable of rising occasionally above the limitations of the normal mind, the limits of the person; but they are not aware that they do this, because expecting wrongly they think they only attain to unconsciousness.

We might perhaps here try to get some further ideas along the line of 'jelly-fish.' Nor should this be considered ridiculous. Once an aspirant asked a teacher on what he should concentrate, expecting doubtless to be given some lofty object or sublime concept; but the answer was the unexpected — the mark of wisdom: "Try a match-box!" Why, then, should we not meditate on a jelly-fish?

Why not, indeed? for a jelly-fish is a popular name of many kinds of what science calls acalephs, such as sea-blubbers, etc. And a jelly-fish is a headless organism; and that is just what we want to do, get rid of our head, and withdraw that pseudopod

into the body of the plasm — that is, the 'sphere.'

Jelly-fish are called in the unlovely language of science 'discophorous hydrozoans'—that is, creatures that live in the water and have a disk-like form. They are possessed of an umbrella-like disk, by the pulsation of which, that is, by its alternate dilation and contraction, they propel themselves through the water. They are like a free lung in their natural element.

Why, then, may we not exercise our imagination in translating this living symbol into language that may be applied to man's spiritual plasm? At the beginning of the transformation we should thus become human 'jelly-fish,' floating about in the great ocean of life, possibly an ocean of colour and sound. The analogy of course should not be strained into an identity; for the 'floating' is really not a moving about. "There is no travelling on that path," as the mystical commentary, called the *Jñāneshvarī*, on the *Bhagavad Gītā* has it. Nor is the developed organism of a jelly-fish so good an analogy as an amœba, but it will serve as an exercise.

Now how does a jelly-fish think? Because it will be with us, by analogy, a 'thinking' somewhat of that kind, though in another order.

We have to lose our mind to gain our Mind; we have to lose, momentarily, our mind, and begin all over again developing Mind in a new sea of substance, in the sea of the quintessence.

Those who are interested in these things may read somewhat of them in *A Mithiac Ritual* (the VIth little volume of my *Echoes from the Gnosis*), which deals with the formation of this 'perfect body,' the beginnings of which we are endeavouring to feel after.

It is fundamentally a question of temperature and blood, using these terms in an extended meaning. It is by means of Mind that we first let the temperature down and create 'jelly-fish,' or amœbæ—that is to say, shapes rather than forms, for they are at first connected with 'expectations,' and do not descend into the formal mind; nevertheless it is the Mind that is the great reducer of temperature.

And here we may refer to the idea suggested in the adventure called 'Adumbrations.' Man in prenatal existence is built up all over again, right from the amœba-stage, through all phases of evolution; and we may very well regard this marvellous fact of embryology as an adumbration of still greater things. It is indeed a case of the development of 'jelly' and 'fish'—ovum and spermato-zoon, egg and serpent, the master-

symbols of little and great genesis and of apotheosis in the mystery-traditions.

What is set forth in the lower mysteries of generation as the means of formation of the human body, may very well be believed to be a foreshadowing of the greater mysteries of regeneration, and a typifying of the manner of the 'Great Work.' So that we may guess with some assurance that what is expected of us, is that, in the next stage or re-generation, we should attempt consciously to build out of the life-fluid of the Divine Mother a form, a new mind, which will link us right back to the uttermost points in evolution.

If we were to think more earnestly of these mysteries, on the symbolic lines that have been handed down to us from antiquity, we should see how absurd are the vague ideas on the next stage of consciousness that are generally floating about in the minds of people who have not heard of these traditions.

The great thing is not to expect miracles, but natural processes. It is a most healthy exercise to be continually analysing and revising our own expectations, trying to see clearly what we are expecting, remembering further that man is just what he expects. Expectation is really his field of consciousness. To 'expect' means to 'look out'; expectation is thus the mould

into which power is cast, and which thus creates 'shapes'; and shapes in this connection have to do with capacities. Anything cast into a mould turns out a shape; form should mean something far more definite and organic than shape.

But if it may be said that 'man is what he expects,' this does not mean that if we expect to become the 'Absolute' or have 'cosmic consciousness' immediately, that our expectations will be successful or fulfilled.

By 'expect' in this sense is meant see forth beyond the normal mind-limit, and by 'see' is not meant absurd wild imagination, but guessing the next step in proper orderly sequence.

It is quite believable that he who could guess what would be the exact next step in his evolution, could immediately take this step; this is the right use of imagination and reasonable anticipation. But to do this there must be capacity for expecting in detail. Right expectation is thus the first step to becoming.

Expectation is the mould which creates shapes, and shapes are the first foundations upon which power builds, in the creation of form. Shapes are again as it were the skeletons, or rather scaffoldings, of forms. There is a definite *specific* something in forms which there is not in shapes.

It is, then, not such a wild guess, not so absurd an exercise in the practice of living symbolism, to picture oneself as a 'jelly-fish' floating about in the ocean of the one element, the unitary or quintessential life-substance, and then to add to this all the ideas we can get along the line of prenatal existence; imagining that we are being built up by this life, and that we are thus fluid and independent; that we are blossoming forth from within the life-fluid of a body of substance greater than ourselves.

Neither an amœba, nor a child in prenatal existence, knows of the struggle for existence as we do; they only know themselves and the processes with which they are surrounded. It would thus be a great help in this exercise to try to imagine the feelings of a babe before it is born, and how that it is not such a surprise to it, as we might be inclined to believe, to get born, because it has already felt the magnetic currents of the world by means of the life-fluids of its mother—the world which it now when born sees by means of mind, instead of only feeling. Before birth babies are simple creatures, or creatures without mind, and their life-feeling is thus, as it were, a more direct imprint of the cosmos than when they are dominated by a separative mind. There is no mind, it is said, till the

first breath is drawn, and then it is embryonic only.

It is thus quite credible that if a man could realise the consciousness of his sympathetic system, he would come into closer contact with the working of the cosmic laws than he does in his normal separative consciousness. And this, indeed, is said to be what happens when the neophyte is first instructed how to leave his mind or person behind, "as a shell upon the sea-shore of manifestation," and retire into the depth of his sympathetic nervous system.

But for such an one the consciousness will not be just that of a lower animal. He is being trained deliberately to leave his mind behind, and does not do so by accident or owing to natural causes, as is the case with idiots. Though he loses the form of his mind, he does not entirely lose the power of his mind. He will no more be able to cast his awareness into mind-consciousness; but he will be possessed of very great capacity of awareness.

He will, we may well believe, when retiring back into 'blood' and 'nerves,' have all the alertness of a well-developed mind, all the power and capacity for observation, but he will not be able to cast his experience into any mental forms, because they are experiences of the other

side of the world, and not the formal mind side.

Such are a few guesses at what we may expect, or imaginings of what we may look out for, if we consciously attempt to re-generate ourselves.

XIII.

ON THE ART OF SYMBOLISM.

"The Mind of the Father hath sown symbols through the world."—THE CHALDÆAN ORACLES.

MANY people talk vaguely about symbols and some are really interested in symbolism; but even of those who may happen to possess a little learning on the subject, how few are there who, if they turn and really face themselves and there is no audience to play to, can say they have got to the heart of the matter, or know how rightly to seize the proteus whose changing forms they are ever grasping at, and so force it to speak true words?

I, for my part, freely admit that I am as yet far from the real heart of the matter. I cannot yet hold the proteus steady and force it to speak true words of power; but there is joy in the game of catch-as-can-catch, and I am game for a short bout; though doubtless, as of yore, the wily one will change into something I have never thought of before, and I shall have no grip in mind to hold him.

'Symbol' is no native name; it is a Greek importation (*symbolon*), and its root-meaning is said to be a sign, or token, by which one knows or infers a thing. The utterance of this word should awaken in us the idea of putting together (*sym-bállein*), with the notion (in the passive) of to correspond and to tally. But to put together is to compare, and so to compare one's own opinion with facts, and hence to conclude, infer, conjecture, interpret; and it is from this last meaning that, the wisdom of the word-books tells us, we get the meaning of symbol as a sign, or token, by which one knows or infers a thing.

I am afraid that we have not yet grasped our proteus amid all these changing forms of words. A symbol is a sign, but that again is a Latin importation (*signum*), and we may pass it by. A symbol is a token; that is good English. Token is connected with to teach, to point out, show, witness; to betoken is to be a symbol of.

But words will not help us much; they are forms of speech that are ever slipping away into other forms. A symbol is not a word; it is something more fundamental; in its proper meaning it is something almost more primitive than an ideogram, or type-picture. Let us go in search of the idea—the living idea, not some abstract inference—the fulness, not the flat.

If there is a 'flat-land' as compared with a

three-dimensional land, may we not think of symbol-language as a three-dimensional language, so to speak, when compared with the 'flat' languages of ordinary speech? Or, to use these words in a deeper meaning, speech in its most primitive mode is action, and so symbolic action, or drama, might be said to be the true symbol-language. This symbol- or three-dimensional language is closely connected with ceremony. And ceremony (Lat. *ceremonia*) is a word formed on a stem that grows from the root *cre* (as in *creo*, I make, create), which is of the same origin as the Sanskrit *kri* (as in *karma*, action, doing). A ceremony is a sacred rite; that is, it is typical, and as such should be of creative potency, for as the Chaldæan Oracle has it: "The Mind of the Father hath sown symbols through the world." That which is typical is ideal, for type and idea are synonyms.

Are we now getting any nearer the heart of the matter? Are we beginning to make our symbols alive? Can we afford to dismiss any true symbol with the dull remark: "It's only a symbol"? The universe itself is a symbol; man is a symbol.

Even in their lowest strata symbols are the 'out-lines,' so to say, of three-dimensional objects from some point of view, seen from one side or another; and 'out-line' in its inner meaning is

intimately connected with idea; it is, as it were, a ground-plan.

Now as symbols in this sense have to do with ideas and types, are connected with the living side of things, it is not possible to interpret a symbol in one set fashion only and tie it down to one set form. We cannot make an 'exact science' of symbolism; it is initiatory rather than didactic; it 'starts' one towards living ideas, it does not peg us out in some rigid configuration.

So that if it is asked, how does one know that this or that is the right interpretation of any particular symbol, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to prove it in the way of physical demonstration. If the interpretation really fits, there will be a response within. It will be a living response; not the imprisoning of the mind in a dead form. In the interpretation of symbols we must be prepared to give up exactness, in the way it is generally understood, and allow our minds free play. At the beginning it is best to use any hint that seems to promise well; first apply it in every direction, then as soon as ever it has led to another clue, throw it away.

In learning the great language of symbols it is necessary to keep the mind ever free, plastic, and adaptable. If we persist in keeping stuck in the old ruts, we shall never learn the meaning

of symbols. The beauty of great symbols is the infinite variety of their modes of interpretation. To think there is only one definite interpretation for each symbol is to paralyse one's symbol-mind, and make it fall dead and flat into the superficial. One should play with symbols as a mathematician plays with numbers; symbols are the playthings of the gods. And I think the secret of interpreting symbols is to get the symbol first into one's mind, and not one's mind into the symbol. The mind should not be allowed to relate itself to the symbol, should not allow itself to be attracted by the picture into going out of itself and crystallising itself into one form; but the symbol should rather be compelled to relate itself to the mind. It should be taken into the mind, and then the mind will be able to see it from every side and grasp it as a whole.

Symbol-language has its letters and its words, and the above may be suggested as a method of learning the alphabet. But symbol-language is not the same thing quite as symbolical language, nor is it to be confused with metaphorical language. Metaphor is transferring the meaning of one word to another in ordinary speech. It is exceedingly important, quite a mystic art, a sort of game of 'general post' among the ideas connected with words.

A metaphor gives a meaning that is not to be

understood literally, or according to the face-value of the letters as we know them, but a reading of root-ideas, as it were, abstracting or subtracting the substance from them. That is to say, we take away the substance that built the idea and keep the idea, and then expand it and spread it out cosmically in every direction. Metaphors may be said to be more connected with substance, symbols with spirit.

Symbols should be 'eaten' and 'digested,' so to say. Triangles and svastikas, for instance, might be said to be symbols which, when gazed upon in an ecstatic state of mind—that is, taken within and contemplated—nourish the body of essence; if made alive they create pleasing sensations in it, stimulate, feed, and excite it, rearrange all its activities, alter the currents in it and build it. All great symbols are said to do this—that is, all cosmic symbols or forms that are directly related to things-that-are. These cosmic symbols suggest modes of creative energies; when creative powers act they draw certain patterns and plans and not others; and these patterns, types, and ideas are cosmic symbols, and it is by ecstatically gazing at them, that they nourish our root-substance and so enform it cosmically, or in a harmonious or orderly fashion.

Symbols are toys in the great game. We

should thus learn to play with symbols in the true Kindergarten, the 'everlasting revelling-place'—the essential substance that is our nursery and our cradle, and our womb for birth into greater things. But this game is a living thing; we should make symbols act; we learn little while we keep them steady. A true symbol should be ever in motion. Nor should we be satisfied till we can glide from one symbol to another. While we think of symbols as dead detached objects cut off from one another, and bearing no relation to each other, we shall know nothing. We should play with them, draw them or picture them from every standpoint, till we catch fresh glimpses every moment.

Let us think of one great world-body ever in motion; all true symbols may be said to be attempts to snapshot this object in motion. They are like separate films for a cinematograph; the great difficulty is to get them in their right sequence and make them pass in procession before the inner eye. If we could manage to do this and obtain the right sequence for a moment, then we should get in touch with some real living ideas. But the right grouping of the symbols is essential. However, the more we practise, the better we guess, the faster will the real ideas come. It is perhaps the greatest of arts—the true practice of the

art of symbolism. We can do it with our minds, with our eyes, with our bodies. Indeed if we could act this continuity between symbols, we should, it is said, breathe in ideas with every movement of the essential body; but this is far more difficult than practising with our minds.

Of course all this applies only to true symbols; many things called symbols are distorted or false appearances. No signs, no symbols, are worth anything unless they signify facts; that is to say, unless they represent transformations which will be experienced when inner vision develops.

A true symbol is something capable of containing life. It is never of any arbitrary shape. It must *be*, or it will never convey living ideas. Symbols, I believe, are not given to make us think in the ordinary sense; their main use is to convey life to our life and bring about a union. Their real use is to convey life of such power that it is capable of actually making an impression, or depression, upon the substance with which the higher mind is connected. They are the link between thought and action. Symbolism is connected with sigils, signatures, characters, types, in their root-meanings, with all the nomenclature connected with the impression of ideas on substance.

Before a man is capable of causing his subtle

substance to go through all these transformations,* or metamorphoses, at which we have hinted, before these 'initiations'—beginnings or startings—can really take place in the root-matter of his vehicles, it is possible for the transformations actually to take place in symbol in his higher mind of ideation. And this is a very desirable thing. To accomplish it in body is doubtless possible for a few only; but to accomplish it in mind is possible for many more. It is not dangerous, and it is a great developer of mental capacity.

It is a method of contemplation. The symbol-learner should strive to get the mind quite still; to get the idea of the mind being as it were a sea of subtle substance. He must not think discursively; must not space out separate symbols and look at them one after the other; but try to 'feel' the mind-substance being moulded.

* The earliest redactor of the Naassene Document writes: "And the Chaldæans say that Soul is very difficult to discover and hard to understand; for it never remains of the same appearance, or form, or in the same state, so that one can describe it by a general type, or comprehend it by an essential quality." On this the Church Father Hippolytus comments, referring to the Naassenes, or Disciples of the Serpent of Wisdom: "These variegated metamorphoses they have laid down in the Gospel superscribed 'According to the Egyptians.'" (See *Thrice-greatest Hermes*, i. 150.)

If, for instance, he think of 'potter' and 'clay,' he should try to imagine the substance of the mind being moulded from one to the other continuously backwards and forwards, and watch them grow *within* himself. When practising symbols we should never 'objectivise' or project; we should rather 'feel' them grow within, and then an occasional idea may flash through.

It is, however, not desirable to pay too much attention to these ideas, for noticing them immediately transfers the consciousness to another 'plane' of mind; for though this practice is a mental one it is not in itself a 'science.' It is better to notice the ideas that flash forth just sufficiently to record them on the memory-plate, so that they can be used later when the tranquillity of mind that is the essential condition of the practice, has been left.

The world-body, or great surround, or essence-envelope, of every man may be thought of as, so to speak, the L.C.M., or rather G.C.M., of all symbols. It is a useful practice to play with spheres and circles and conic sections, and so try to get ideas along these lines. It is quite credible that it is possible to resolve every symbol into an 'attitude,' so to say, or 'action,' or rather 'activity,' of this world-body, and

so connect and link up all symbols by means of this world-soul, which is soul and body also.

This world-body may be said to be our way out of manhood into the cosmos; and so also is the *art* of symbolism the way out of men's language into the language of the gods. Root-symbols may be regarded as fundamental lines and curves which carry with them certain powers and certain meanings, and these lines and curves are to be found in every science and art of men. They are, from this standpoint, the roots from which all sciences and arts grow, the foundations on which they are built, the gates forth to greater worlds.

It is not, however, to be supposed that such symbolism is the end of the matter; by no means. It is introductory to the linking of Mind on to this world-body. Symbols are, so to say, snapshots of the self-motivity of this world-body; they teach concerning its breathing, concerning the pulsing of its heart.

And even as we can get from art to science or gnosis by means of symbols, so can we get from mind to mind and from Person to Person,—not personality, but the Higher Person or Mind.

But this world-body does not mean a mass of some vast size. This world-body has no definite size; it breathes and is a different size for every mode of breath. It is a node, rather. It is an

'atom' ordered according to the greater cosmos; and in the greater cosmos the mystics say all things are the same size, or all things are any size, or, again, there is no such thing as size. It does not count in the greater consciousness, any more than we think of the 'size' of our breath; though from another point of view, mystically considered, the objective worlds of size are in the breath of the Gods; they breathe and the worlds act, but the Gods do not consider their size.

It might thus be said that every man's world-body is the same size. They are all exactly alike; each is an 'atom,' each is a scale. It is our Great Person or Higher Self that decides what key the scale is in. This means that our Divine Word relates our group of 'letters,' or 'sounds,' or 'planets,' on to something further, and gives them a peculiar meaning of their own. Yet every world-body consists of the same letters, the same groups of sounds, otherwise the Holy Confraternity would be an impossibility.

All this is intimately connected with the mystery of Spirit or Divine Breath; so that when a man's mind is capable of being 'fired' with Spirit, it can immediately mould and form his substance into symbols. It is this power of continually forming man's substance into symbols which brings with it the power of understanding,

for symbols may be said to be the link between substance and Spirit.

It should be noted in this connection, that this language of symbols does not teach us about reincarnation; it is not on that side of things, and this interpretation cannot be forced upon it. Reincarnation is connected with the mind of man, and can be talked about in words; symbols depict the activities of Life in the man's world-body, and are not concerned with death, or form in activity, and the experiences of little persons.

Symbols have rather to do with that which is æonian, or age-long. A true symbol must be of world-wide experience and age-long experience; it must not be local or temporary.

Thus the only way to control the proteus of symbolism is by becoming him, and so keeping pace with every change, transformation, or metamorphosis; and if one is not as yet strong enough to grip the heart of the matter, at any rate it is something to know the futility of trying to get a true hold by grasping at this or that fleeting appearance.

XIV.

THE SELF-TAUGHT.

"Wisdom, who, after the fashion of a mother, brings forth the Self-taught Race, declares that God is Sower of it."—PHILO, *De Mut. Nom.* 24.

"They who have passed beyond the introductory exercises, becoming Natural Disciples of God, receiving Wisdom free from all toil, migrate to this Incorruptible and Perfect Race, receiving a lot superior to their former lives in genesis."—PHILO, *De Sacrif.* 2.

"This Race, my son, is never taught; but when He willeth it, its memory is restored by God."—*Corpus Hermeticum*, xiii. (xiv.) 2.

THE Self-taught have been called by many names. They are spoken of as the Mind-born, or again as the Will-born, the Sons of Will and Union, the Re-born or New-born. For the mystic, however, this does not mean that they are born from any other, but rather that it is they who re-generate themselves; they are spiritual folk.

Let us, therefore, turn our attention to some preliminary considerations concerning this Self-teaching or Self-education, or the drawing-forth of the Self, or bringing into activity of what is Best in us.

Those who have been breathed upon with the Divine Afflatus, even momentarily, who have once been touched consciously with Spirit (Ātman), realise that there is a vital gnosis that transcends all formal knowledge or instruction. They no longer desire to know the Self, since knowledge means the knowing of something other than oneself, but they aspire to become that Self in all their being.

Their motto is not 'Know thyself,' but rather 'Match thy Self.' It is for them to make themselves match what they have once sensed of this Reality in highest ecstasis. They then for a moment know how their true Mind has chosen, and that the carrying out of this choice in every detail of their personal lives will alone bring happiness. They have realised the first lesson of Self-teaching: that the limited self is not to choose the details; its only lawful choice is to follow, and to try to choose in such a fashion as to make all the things over which its will has control, match the Great Choice of the Master within, the Great Purpose of its own Divinity; and that until the limited self does this it will not attain to Sonship, or to true power, or continuous peace.

With the first realised touch of Spiritual Power the Will of the Master is born within, in the depth of the man's inmost nature; it

then remains for him to stimulate and develop his own will to follow, to control his limited self, and guide it in the direction which matches this greater and higher and all-seeing Will; so that the union may become complete, and that the 'chords' of all his natures may vibrate in unison with the great cosmic Chord within, and so the teaching of the Self, and true understanding, may come through pure and undistorted.

It is the essence or atomic substance, or fundamental nature * of the man, that receives the impression of this Divine Will. And this a-tomic or pure or in-divisible substance is the ground of his individuality; it is in reality a robe of glory, or a mantle of aroma (the 'sweet savour' of Basilides), which is the true essence of man's nature.

In the case of man, the Great Will, it is said, does not 'lawfully' act directly upon form, or formal mind, else the form would not have 'free-will' or 'choice'; for there is a certain definite 'free-will' developed in or bestowed upon all things in form. The formal mind is free to act according to its limited desires, and

* In some respects represented in Indian mysticism by *buddhi*, from root *budh*, which originally meant to 'fathom a depth.' Compare the Greek *bythós* and Latin *fundus*. *Buddhi* (understanding) is said to proceed immediately, as the second *tat-tva* (that-ness or element), from *mūla prakṛiti* (root-nature).

in discord with the ultimate Will of the man. But the ultimate Will of the individual operates directly and immediately in root-substance. This Will is really Power, animating root-substance. Roots grow downward and branches grow upward. Real ultimate Will is Power descending, Power towards substance, not form. It is the power of firmness and solidarity, faith and love. It is said that in the mystery-traditions the choral dance between the acts of the drama represented the Will, or how Spiritual Power acts in root-matter—the dance of the atoms or myriads, or fact in action; while the mystery-play itself represented how things happen in form, or how the mystery acts on the form-side of things. Eternity (the Æon) dances round ideas; Eternity here connotes substance, not form; it is that which surrounds forms.

In re-generation, this fundamental substance, instead of being a Blinding Veil that enwombs the person, becomes a surround of motive power for the raying-forth of the higher Person. With the first realised touch of Spirit, this Veil becomes active, and thereafter self-conscious. It is transformed into motive power, and becomes an 'external' vehicle towards greater things instead of remaining an internal impulse. The true Ideas of the greater Mind stand still in the midst, and the Power becomes

as it were a vehicle outside, like a Charioteer in a chariot.

But before this magic chariot can be sung into activity, before the transformation can be operated that turns man inside out, so that he embraces the without within, union must be achieved, contact established, the man must be touched with the Thyrsus of the ever-young God of Joy. When he is thus touched, he becomes a drinker of spirit and an eater of wisdom; he inwardly digests all things.

When conscious mystic union is attained, the routine of daily life 'feels' like, or may be compared with, the process of digestion in a world-body; it all happens within what might be called the 'great' or the 'magical' body of the man, as the result of 'eating' or the proper activity of the true Self in the man, and is not viewed as external at all. And as with the God-touched, or Self-born, all the processes of the normal physical body begin to assume for him 'cosmic' significance and importance, so also is the obverse the case, and the external happenings in the world become like the natural orderly processes of digestion, nutrition and secretion, following upon the eating of the 'substance' of things, the nourishment taken in by the Great or Higher Mind as distinguished from the limited mind of normal consciousness.

The mastication of 'symbols' by this Higher Mind, the extracting from external objects their internal meaning, sets up currents in the new-born 'cosmic body,' and nourishes it and makes it grow. This 'great body' or 'world-body' is age-long or æonian, but it will not become active or linked on to the personal vehicles within time unless it is fed.

The man who has this greater consciousness beginning to dawn in him, no longer takes so much notice of physical happenings, since they are for him past results; he is more interested in what he is 'eating,' that is to say, in extracting meaning from physical phenomena and the activities of fate.

Action 'determines' the great mother side of things; those who preach, even sincerely, virtue and purity, and do not act them, are virtuous in one part of their nature only. All modes of human activity must be towards virtue before the fundamental nature can be in any way reliable. This fundamental nature is connected with substance, and substance is played upon and altered by action, and it is only right action that will make the link between man and Master of such a nature as to translate reliably. For when THE MASTER really teaches, that is, teaches directly, He plays upon the whole of man, He does not stimulate a special

part. He enwraps the whole man and all his natures with His Presence; and it is only he who chooses wisely what he thinks, what he feels, and what he acts, who will be rewarded with a unitary Vehicle capable of expressing the Language of THE MASTER, which is never a language of words, but is a deducing from Nature and Fate.

The Spirit is too wise to teach through only one mode, because for the expression of reality all three modes of activity, thought, speech, and deed, corresponding with the personal mental, emotional, and physical vehicles, are necessary, just as subject, predicate, and object are for expression in the language of men. The unitary nature may be thought of as the idea expressed by the sentence of the three personal 'bodies,' the three lower 'words'; it is the reality, the root-form or idea, to which they give expression. And it is only when it is pure that intuition is reliable; and it is made pure by each 'word' expressing it by obeying the true laws of its nature. The subject or subjective of this sentence, or utterance of power, may be regarded as the mental word, the verb as the emotional personal activity or raying-forth, and the object or objective as the physical. The fundamental nature, however, is not form, or rather formal, in the same way

that the other three are; it is that which lies behind form, the idea expressed by the nature of the substance which is stirred by the three.

We should beware of objectivising the Holy Presence, of putting the Master in one place and the pupil in another; this is not a sign of Spirit, and direct teaching from the Master in activity is *via* Spirit. All men are in touch with Spirit, just as we are all in contact with the Sun. But only those who have perfected themselves by right thought, right speech, and right deed, and by unselfishly using their powers for humanity, and not for self, can possibly have created a Vehicle of perception capable of correctly translating Cosmic Language into the language and ideas of mortal men; because that is the only way such a Vehicle is produced, *viz.* the exact correspondence between right thought, speech, and deed.

Thus the fundamental nature is first of all a womb or veil; but when it is acted upon by Spirit it is made to conceive perfect ideas, and so becomes the direct organ of perception or intuition. He who can make his unitary nature alive and active by right action, so as to conceive true ideas, is a true Learner in the School of the Self-taught. This is the only way in which *direct* truth comes; teaching, or informa-

tion rather, by other ways is not direct, but wanders through the tortuous labyrinth of personal mind.

It is right action, or uniting properly with fate, that makes the root-nature conceive spiritually, so that its ideas correspond with the great plans or impressions of the Divine Will or Great Fate. Then can the man talk, or see, or communicate inside or outside spheres or worlds, because he then matches.

From this point of view there are not many Masters, but only one MASTER; for perfect union is the ground-plan of their Being.

Man also is a unity — three in one. We might think of the mother-side in him as Substance, of the father-side as Power — in one mode from without, wrapping round the Substance and creating 'zones' in it, as in the great symbol of Serpent and Egg, and in the other mode, from within, dominating the whole substance — and of the son-side as conceived Ideas—true Ideas which partake of the energy of the father and the substance of the mother —which are born within the Person whose father- and mother-sides are both active.

The Mind of all true Masters, the Divine Mind, is one; and He has one Body. The many Powers of Mind which are the 'Minds' of Masters are as keys which unlock the gateways

of personality, and make the man free of Cosmic Mind.

And this One Body of Masterhood, we may well believe, must vehicle all Masters and everything else one can think of. But we cannot realise its nature by adding object to object, by ever looking outward; for this we must go within, ever deepening ourselves, till we find the 'seed' within us of the One, the germ of pure Spirit; and then at-oned with this within, we experience the mystery without, for the ideas conceived within the unitary nature correspond with the plans of the Body of all things.

This seed of Spirit 'within' the unitary nature corresponds with the consciousness that perceives unity. This spiritual 'atom' is perfect, and the common measure of all 'creatures'; and, therefore, Divinity can play directly into its all-seeing nature. It is the 'eye' of the heart; it is the heart of the 'æon.' This is the mediating link between God and man, and through it the Divine gives of itself to supply the deficiencies of all 'forms' of consciousness, which must necessarily be imperfect. It contains the mystery of the Fulness; for Spirit is that which fulfils or completes all.

This seed of Spirit, or all-seed-potency, as Basilides calls it, for it is everywhere and nowhere, 'within' the unitary substance, is in

exact correspondence with the consciousness that perceives the One Body of the Master Mind—or perhaps it would be better to say Mass rather than Body; for this Body is not in any form, nor is it to be thought of under the notions of position or extension. It is on the formal and personal and limited side of things that a body is something extended in space; but on the spiritual or impersonal side it is otherwise.

The germ of Spirit, the true Light-spark, might perhaps be conceived of less erroneously as a sort of common specific gravity, or perhaps rather tension, within the very essence of all substance; and the realisation of community with this constitutes the link between the personal and impersonal side of things, and also the mediating mystery between the mind of man and the Mind of the Master.

When the 'perfect body' or 'body of resurrection' is spoken of, it is difficult for most people not to fall into the old rut of the formal mind, and imagine a glorified physical body. It is more useful to conceive of consciousness and soul by meditating on the symbol of a vast sphere containing unlimited forms; the Master-Consciousness would of course contain every form, or rather idea, conceivable, and His Body be the objective representative of the whole Body of ideas.

The candidate for Self-instruction might thus conceive of his highest mind as containing every idea he can think of, and his highest body as being every idea which he is capable of making manifest and giving expression to.

The symbol of the sphere connotes a whole or completeness, and also a field of activity, that wherein the whole nature of one anything—personality, atom, or anything that has a right to call itself one—spins. The term sphere, thus conceived, may be taken to signify the field of activity of one definite form of motion; and from another point of view it also means the 'body' of that thing. When the centre of the sphere is regarded as the true subject of consciousness or the One Person, and the sphere itself as the Only Body, it is the Man or Mind looking forth to multiplicity; when the sphere is regarded as the consciousness and the centre as his body, it symbolises Man in the mode of unity.

It is very hard, as Thrice-greatest Hermes teaches, to leave the things we have grown used to; we are all stuck fast in the habitual. But if we would approach the Master-Mind, if we would dare to hope to snatch any greatness from it, we must give up all fixed notions, and endeavour always to keep ourselves in such an attitude of mind (this has to do with the magic

of gravity, and balance, and tension and attention) as shall be ready to conceive on the spot, at once, anew, afresh, for every hour and moment of the day. For the Master-Mind may be said to be connected with the true Sun-Mind and varies (for us) with every moment of time. And by fixed notions, as contrasted with living ideas, is here meant imagining that the same word or sound or symbol always conveys the same idea at all hours of the day or night.

The Master-Mind is awake or a reality in the state of Spirit, and the state of Spirit is connected with fate and happenings; it is itself the 'plane' above fate, where the man begins to control fate and talks by means of happenings. Before the Learner is able, in even the smallest measure, to understand the Master-Language, he must become alert to the happenings and circumstances which surround him, for they *are* the Language of Spirit; and before he can understand, he must first *see* the Language of the Gods, which is perpetually written all round him in happenings, and then learn to relate real ideas to these happenings, and not superstitions.

The Learner in this School must try to be able to grasp how magical is this Language, how infinite the variety of meaning; he must be alert for ideas in all directions. If he would not sink into the quicksands of formal mind, he must

keep running, keep active, keep alive to the meaning of activity.

The substance of true Mind embraces the mass of all man's personalities, which are as the films of a bioscope. Unless we keep them in motion the story is not told, the drama is not played. If the man sticks in one personality, and much more if he remains stuck in some fixed idea of one personality, then the vision stops with everything in some grotesque attitude which means nothing.

When a Master talks He may for a time impress the mind of a pupil with formal ideas—that is teaching; but THE MASTER does not teach. He *works through* the disciple. It is only by *direct* contact with Spirit that the consciousness works directly through happenings, and thus the man becomes Self-taught. Other instruction is not direct; it is round by way of the personal mind, and therefore askew.

XV.

ON THE WAY OF THE PATH.

In many an allegory and myth the tragic story of man-soul is told us. And this is how they tell it us from this tragic-seeming point of view.

Utterly absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure, entirely oblivious of its heavenly origin, the reckless soul plunges ever more and more deeply into the delights of sense. Infatuated by the lures of outer objects of desire, insatiate, it seizes them greedily, and eats and drinks, and drinks and eats, again and yet again. And so the days of life and death pass and repass, confusedly and unremembered, in presence of the undiminished abundance of an ever-spread feast. Drunken and surfeited it sleeps, and wakes again to yet another day of drunkenness and surfeit. It is the harlot and the prodigal, who take no thought for the morrow and hasten to forget yesterday.

But deep wisdom assures us that there must be another side to the seeming; and we may

well believe that, though she seem to abandon herself, she is not really abandoned; though she to all appearance debase herself, she is not really debased in the estimation and love of her lord. The mystery of the divine love that fulfils all things, and completes all imperfections, persuades us that it is for love of her divine spouse and complement she leaves her home, in utter self-abandonment, to brave the long passion of forgetfulness, that in the end he may through her live on earth as in heaven, and she through him may know here even as she is known there.

Who shall say which of these eternal lovers is the nobler: she who in her great love chooses not to know, that she may be known, and so at last bring self-knowledge to birth in passion and in travail; or he who loves with such utter abandonment of self, that he can give up all, even the dearest object of his desire, finally to surrender himself wholly to her that he may live through her alone?

All the stories, as all stories must, would make it appear that there are two souls in man, separate yet ever seeking each other. This is one way of looking at the mystery—the natural way of appearance, when one looks through the eyes of either at the other. This way is by no means to be passed by, for it determines every

mode of preliminary discipline. But there is another way, when man looks through the eyes of both, and sees himself in the ecstasy of self-recognition. Let us first look through the eyes of the one at the other in space and time.

In the outward-going soul, the soul turned spacewards, at some moment, determined by a choice it cannot know in time, there arises a new longing other than its love of objects of desire; it yearns to return, it longs for home. This 'nostalgia,' as it is called in the myth of Odysseus, is the first condition of seeking the way of the Path. Led on by this longing the soul, as naturally as it went forth, now as naturally feels that its forth-going is no longer desirable, and that homewards means return. As it left home by proceeding without, so must it seek home by turning within.

It need hardly be said that the vast majority of the guides who profess to lead the soul home, insist that the path of return lies within. They tell the seeker: God is to be found within the heart; the Kingdom of Heaven is within you. The only way is to be found in the conversion of the whole nature. The things we have grown used to are to be abandoned, and every energy is to be turned to hastening within. The approaches to this way are mapped out in innumerable disciplines and exercises, so much so

that most seekers are fully assured that they have found the one and only way, and that their feet are surely set upon the Path.

But if the soul is insatiate in its out-going, it is equally insatiate in its in-going; the innumerable objects of desire it pursued after in its out-going, it in no long time replaces by equally innumerable objects of desire in its in-going. It replaces what it calls the gross by what appears to be the subtle; its direction is other, its mode is still the same; it still pursues after things other than itself.

Happy the soul who becomes aware of this; who by a still more mighty change than that of conversion from the without to the within, operates the transmutation of mode from surface to depth. He who begins to be aware in the depth of his being, knows that the Path is not spread out in space, either in space without or space within; both ways lie on the surface of the eternal depth he now has grown aware of; for the within of appearance is as much of appearance as the without.

There now begins to shine in the mysterious profundities of his depth the first stars of his new heaven and new earth in one; some living ideas, or spiritual instincts, faiths, convictions, of the nature of spiritual gnosis.

He knows by the light of a self-revealing

intuition that it is all one Mystery looking within and looking without simultaneously; and that this looking creates the appearance of forth-going and in-going, whereas in reality the Mystery neither goes forth nor returns, but abides continually.

He knows that it is one and the same Mystery that declares, both as it looks without and looks within: I am the Way. I am the Way, from My Self to my self, and again from my self to My Self. And to that Mystery neither Self nor self are greater or less than another, before or after another.

As the wonderful mystic commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā*, in old Māhrattī, known as the *Jñāneshvarī*, has it:

"When this path is beheld, then thirst and hunger are forgotten; night and day are undistinguished in this road. . . .

"Whether one would set out to the bloom of the East or come to the chambers of the West, without moving is the travelling in this road.

"In this path, to whatever place one would go, that place one's own self becomes. How shall I easily describe this? Thou thyself shalt experience it."

This is the true way to the Path of the Self (Ātman) or Spirit; that is to say, the way in

which we should think of the Path. Basing ourselves on this, and other indications found here and there in the writings of the truly illuminated, we may be bold to think that Spirit is spoken of as the Path, because those who are spiritually awakened, or who are beginning to re-generate themselves, as it were watch their circumstances and fate divide out in front of them—in other words, disentangle themselves—as they arrive in their midst; they always see in front of them the next step as it were a path on a mountain side in a mist.

When they become illuminated by the first rays of the Spiritual Sun, they begin definitely to see this pathway through circumstances. There is always a pathway cleared ready for those who have rid themselves of personal desires. Those who are still battling with their personal desires, have still to battle with circumstances. These have still to fight their way through the thickets; and this we should never forget, for it is right for them to carve their way through circumstances. But when the true spiritual nature is really developed, this will no longer be necessary. The path will be made plain, the thickets will divide, even as the waters of the Red Sea divided for Moses and his host, in the ancient myth.

'Thirst and hunger are forgotten.' Desire

for the objects of the watery and earthy spheres is dead, that is, for the spheres of personality—water and earth being set over against air and fire, in the imagery of the lower mysteries. And therefore as the man has lost desire for them he now rises above them in consciousness—not in position or in body; he is not away from them, or apart from them, he is not without watery and earthy bodies, but his passions are no longer centred in them. He is king of those regions, and takes on a body, as it were, of air (breath or spirit).

And as 'thirst and hunger are forgotten' he feels complete satisfaction; he is now a whole; his path is his complement; it is all he wants or desires. Hunger and thirst of the soul cease; she no longer yearns unknowingly for her spiritual spouse, because she has in front of her the path which is in direct communication with him.

'Night and day' may also here be taken in a mystical sense; either as death and life, or as the mode of the mind looking without and within; for the man now no longer lives in his personal mind. It might also be taken as any or all pairs of opposites.

The second paragraph can also be interpreted in terms of re-generation or self-begetting. It seems to tell us how the new-born feels that he

can either retire to the inmost chambers of his personal mind, or can arrive at the outermost limit of his new world-body, or body of resurrection. 'West' seems to suggest the personal body which he is now dying from (as the Mithriac Ritual tells us), or leaving, like the sun setting in the west. 'East' suggests the new 'perfect body,' or completion, his 'immortality,' that is now dawning, which is 'ripe,' but into which he is only just arriving or being born.

'Bloom' may also be taken as a mystery word, and occurs frequently in the *Chaldæan Oracles*. It suggests the 'down' which covers the 'Common Fruit' of the Plērōma or Fulness, as the Valentinians would have said. But for those who believe in reincarnation, a more immediate meaning may be sought. It may be thought of as a great 'skin,' or surround, as it were a single organ of spiritual sense which covers the fruit of our spiritual nature or substance, when the powers of a man's many personalities have come to maturity, and these true seeds of life are properly set in their one natural fruit. This is the ground, or substance, in which the seeds live and grow all at once, not one after the other; the 'bloom' is produced by the Light of the Spiritual Sun and the Breath of the Gods.

The expression 'chambers' again seems to suggest the dividing up of something, let us say of this sphere of substance, into compartments, and this dividing up connotes mind. So that whether the man proceed to the very surface of his sphere of substance, the ends of his new earth, or whether he retire to the innermost dividing up of it, which is of the nature of mind, there is no motion in consciousness; for the inward dividing up of substance is the self-energising of mind, or mind inworking on itself. Mind thus regarded is not other than substance, nor substance other than mind. It is subject and object in perpetual union.

On this path, in the way or mode of the Spirit, whatever point in space the man would convey his consciousness to, that point becomes his own body or self; it 'bodies' his consciousness for him; it expresses himself. For the truly regenerate, the man born into the Spirit, or re-born in Mind, as the Trismegistic Gnosis phrases it, to whatever he turns his attention, that he becomes. The part becomes the whole, for size does not count. Or, to put it otherwise, from whatever point of view he wishes to look at a thing, that point of view immediately becomes his.

This and similar passages scattered here and

there in mystic literature, if our attention has once been drawn to them, supply us with excellent indications for recognising the way in which the Path of Self-knowledge is to be sought. For when the longing for return, that spiritual nostalgia, once enters the heart of a man, he must seek; he has no choice, for that very longing is the choice of his greater Self, the complement of his imperfection, the object of all his desires.

Now, though it may rightly be said that the Path is one for all, equally true is it that the ways to the Path are innumerable; or rather, that every man has his own way. He cannot set his foot on the Path consciously by following any other man's way. The Wisdom of things has laid him down and mapped him out as his own way, his only straight way to the Path; if he follow the way of another he will stray from himself, and so lose the straight way to the Path.

Nevertheless, though each man's way lies in himself, this 'in himself' is not to be taken, as it is natural to take it at first sight, in the naïve sense of meaning 'within himself' as opposed to 'without himself,' and so materialising a spiritual mystery. That mistake has been made by many a seeker, and even by many a school of mystics. More wise is the advice which is given in that

excellent little treatise known as *Light on the Path*, when it says:

"Seek out the way.

Seek the way by retreating within.

Seek the way by advancing boldly without."

This is balanced advice, the way of the life of the spirit, which lives in the union of the in-breath and out-breath; indeed in the mode of the spirit the in-breath and out-breath are not consecutive but simultaneous. This admirable little book tells of the nature of the way with true insight; and there must be few who cannot see that such instruction completely rebuts the charge of unpracticality that has so often been brought against the mystic way; for it shows that its pursuit is the most immediate, intense, wakeful, agile, living thing in the world. Spontaneous intensification of awareness, instantaneous operation, immediate comprehension, perpetual agility and adaptability,—these spiritual powers and many another of like nature can hardly be called unpractical; they are rather magical, and miraculous.

It is therefore well said in *The Voice of the Silence*:

"Thou canst not travel on that Path before thou hast become that Path itself."

Here 'travelling' is prefaced by 'becoming,' and becoming connotes something other than

intellectual appreciation, where there is perpetual separation of subject and object; it signifies rather the life-side of things, and first realises itself in the modes of sym-pathy and com-passion. It is the Path of Life and not of Death; and travelling on the Path of Life is conditioned by self-motivity and not by compulsion.

And here I would quote perhaps one of the most magnificent instructions preserved to us from the Gnosis of antiquity. It is found in the Trismegistic tractate known as the 'Mind to Hermes' (*Corp. Herm.* xi. (xii.) 20), and runs as follows:

"Then in this way know (or think) God; as having all things in Himself as thoughts, the whole Cosmos itself.

"If, then, thou dost not make thyself like unto God, thou canst not know Him. For like is knowable to like alone.

"Make, then, thyself to grow to the same stature as the Greatness that transcends all measure; leap forth from every body; transcend all Time; become Eternity (the Æon); and thus shalt thou know God.

"Conceiving nothing is impossible unto thyself, think thyself deathless and able to know all,—all arts, all sciences, the way of every life.

"Become more lofty than all height, and lower than all depth. Collect into thyself all senses of all creatures,—of fire, and water, dry and moist. Think that thou art at the same time in every place,—in earth, in sea, in sky; not yet begotten, in the womb, young, old, and dead, in after-death conditions.

"And if thou knowest all these things at once, — times, places, doings, qualities, and quantities,—thou canst know God."

And the teacher, who evidently spoke out of the depths of his own experience, concludes with the comfortable words:

"So to be able to know good, to will, and hope, is a Straight Way, the Good's own Path, both leading there and easy.

"If thou but sett'st thy foot thereon, 'twill meet thee everywhere, 'twill everywhere be seen, both where and when thou dost expect it not,—waking, sleeping, sailing, journeying, by night, by day, speaking, and saying naught. For there is naught that is not image of the Good."

This is the Path of the Spirit, the One Path, the eternal type, and immanent reality, of every way that leads to it. There is no need to pursue after it, to try to find it some other way, or on some other plane, or in some other state; it is ever present, always immediate. The only

way to seek it is by becoming it at every moment of time; joyously becoming circumstance that it may no longer hinder but perpetually reveal itself as the Straight Way to Union with the Divine.

XVI.

MYSTIC REALITY.

In the modern Western world in general, and perhaps nowhere more so than in England, there exists an innate prejudice against all that savours of the mystic life. Not only among the people, but also among those who set the thought-fashion of the day, the mystic is viewed with suspicion when not treated with contempt.

If we seek to discover the 'reason' for this prejudice, the answer comes back loudly from all sides: Mysticism is not practical. It is assumed as incontestable that the one business of man here on earth is to be practical; and thereon it is concluded with emphasis that any departure from this clear duty diminishes man's efficiency and lessens his virtue.

The present adventure is a very brief consideration of this matter. It will neither take up the cudgels to do battle blindly for so-called mystics against so-called philistines, nor will it attempt in any way to lessen the worth of the

practical virtues or diminish the value of the theoretical powers; it will rather endeavour to find new meanings for old names, by seeking to discover what is best in both the theoretical (in its ancient and native sense of contemplative) and the practical (or pragmatic, or even poetic, that is, poetic in its primitive meaning). For when these natural and necessary, mutual complements of man's energy are divorced, his gnostic nature must, by the very fact, remain sterile and unproductive of living ideas. It is only by their perpetual union that man can give birth to himself in wholeness, perfection and freedom, and so be ever self-vitalised.

Now, there can be no doubt that what has been called mysticism in the past, must over and over again have to plead guilty to insisting more strongly on the divorcement of those two modes of man-soul than on their union. Mankind is so naturally absorbed in the 'practical,' that the most violent methods have had to be used to turn his attention away from it to the 'contemplative,' and the contrasts and oppositions have thus been painted in the most lurid and glaring colours.

"Brahman is true; the world is false." Such fierce statements of absolute dualism we find set forth as fundamentals in many a devotional faith and religious philosophy. And for the

most part the adherents of the faith or followers of the thought-school never stop to consider the elementary fact, that no such proposition of naïve contrast can in the nature of things set forth the sum of truth; nor is it perceived that as long as man thinks in this mode of duality, so long must he, in the very nature of things, be still bound in his personal mind,—that self-referencing daimonion which is the fabricator of all such contrasts, that marvellous godlet of perpetual division that separates all things by its janus-faced mode of seeing.

It is the truly magical or instantaneous mind alone that can embrace in its vast receptivity every pair, every contrast, every opposition, and every opposite the personal practical mind can invent. Not only so, but for it each one of every pair must immediately and naturally complete itself by means of its co-partner, which it must have with it to make its existence possible. In the consciousness of this magical mind, with all such pairs both complements must exist immediately and simultaneously the one with the other; or, to put it from another point of view, every single separate object is instantly full-filled, perfected, or transformed into a wholeness, by the magical mind that spontaneously completes every one object by all else.

It is not proposed, in this short adventure, to inquire into the noumenal nature of theoretical reality as a truth abstracted from the changing phenomena of practical reality, but rather to insist that there is in essence and fact only one Truth, of which the theoretical and practical, or rather the theoric and pragmatic, realities, noumenal and phenomenal energies, are the simultaneous in-breath and out-breath of its instantaneous life.

This view refuses to divorce the practical reality from the theoretical, for such a divorcement is to it unthinkable. It does not assume, to suit the prejudices of the insufficient, that the contemplative reality is true and the practical false; nor, contrariwise, that the practical is the only reality and the theoretical the baseless fabric of a dream. It does not elaborate a theory of illusion with which to label the mystery of the ever-becoming, and refuse to see truth in the infinite change of appearance; rather it refuses to regard Nature as the concealer of God, in the sense of the Deluder or Great Illusionist, and views her as the means of manifestation of the Divine, His eternal complement and faithful spouse, whereby He perpetually reveals Himself.

Here there is no question of reality being spirit as set over against matter, or of the actualisation of reality being conditioned by

a scale of increasing rarity of matter—the less matter the more spirit, the more matter the less, and therefore the less reality, and *vice versa;* for this view refuses to beg the question of the superiority of one over another of those mysterious and naturally eternal co-partners and co-equals.

According to this practical theory, if there be a sequence, a scale, a gradation, of 'planes' of existence, no one of these is to be considered as in itself superior to any other in respect of reality; for the only way of thinking such a schema as self-existent, in any thorough and complete fashion, is by making the series ever end where it begins, and begin where it ends—that is, in the mode of life conditioned by the form of a circle, the superficial expression of the more perfect symbol, the sphere. That is say, the series both begins and ends at every moment of its existence, and every moment of its existence is the middle point of its being; and therefore every moment is equally proximate to reality.

To realise this more vitally, the circle figure must be converted into a living symbol; that is to say, into a sphere of which the substance is in perpetual flux, ever entering into itself and issuing from itself; and this not only for the whole substance as a unity, but for every

atom of the substance. So that wherever you as person may be in the process, you are in the midst of it; while as monad, that is, as magical mind, you embrace the whole process in yourself.

Reality is not conditioned by matter alone, nor is it conditioned by spirit alone; for matter is not without spirit, nor spirit without matter. They must in the very nature of things co-exist; and every phase of their co-existence is in itself practical reality and theoretic reality in mutual embrace.

This suggests that we have not to go somewhere else to find Truth, but that Truth is always as much here as there, wherever we may be; and that the explanation of one state of consciousness in terms of another is not immediate self-realisation, but a departure from the practical into the theoretical, or *vice versa*, and so a divorcement of the twain instead of a deeper union.

It is often said by the hopeful (or? despairing): Ah, well, we cannot know here; but all will be revealed unto us when we are in heaven (or even, when we are dead!). This has always seemed to me to be a very unsatisfactory expectation; for it can in no way satisfy the practical mind that requires the immediate revelation of the mystery of the actual con-

sciousness in which we are. When a man is no longer in what is called physical consciousness, the problems and puzzles of that state are no longer immediate in the same terms; they can be at best only memories. Full realisation, complete satisfaction, must in the nature of things be in the mode of immediate gnosis and not the theoretical explanation of one state in another.

But what is the 'physical' for the true mystic; that is, from the point of view of this search for Truth that lives only in the perpetual union of the practical and theoretical reality? The real physical is the natural in all its modes, for *physis* = *natura*. The plane on which we happen to be at any moment of time, at any point in space, the phase of consciousness in which we happen to be, is the natural; for Nature, the Spouse of Divinity, must ever be our immediate link with reality, or rather the immediate reality for us as individuals, and therefore the expression of Truth.

If we are in what we afterwards call, at another moment, a psychic state, as compared with what we now call the physical, our present physical state may, at some other moment of time, be very well thought of in its turn as psychic, when we are no longer in it, that is, when it is no longer present to immediate con-

sciousness. Every state we are in is, so long as we are in it, 'physical' or 'natural'; when we are no longer in it, it pertains to memory which is not immediate, but subjective or out of the practical present.

But it may be asked: What of the man who is dead and no longer possessed of a physical body? From what has been said above, it follows that he still has a 'physical,' or 'natural,' body in some grade or other of the 'physical' labyrinth of the ever-becoming.

But you will say: The chain is broken; for his normal physical body is not. To this it may be rejoined: His separated physical body, in the ordinary sense of the term, has been dissolved, it is true; but may it not be that the link of the 'physical' is still there for him? He is still a *continuum*, whether we speculate as to the existence of 'permanent atoms,' or now think of his physical 'body,' in the state which we normally call physical, as inhering in, or conditioned by, all the bodies of humanity, or even of all the creatures of creation; its mode is changed, but its essence still is.

But it may be further objected: The mystic consciousness is consciousness of unity; *that* alone is the mystic reality. To this we may reply: If by unity is meant some abstract state set over against diversity, then that by itself is

no more reality than is diversity when regarded as set over against unity. Unity is union rather than oneness; unity as abstract oneness is an empty abstraction, void and lifeless. Unity as an essential concomitant of reality cannot be without its co-partner diversity; and therefore the attempt to attain to unity as a something entirely apart from diversity, means a suicidal departure from reality, in so far as the attempt is to attain to what has no existence apart from its complement. Unity is conditioned by diversity and diversity by unity; if either goes, both go.

Mystic reality is rather the simultaneous realisation of both; one in many and many in one. Life is unity; multitude is power or manifoldness. The mystery of division is that of mind as creator of form, and the mystery of union is that of mind as dissolver of form. That life, power and mind in their essential nature can be apart from one another, is unthinkable.

It is, therefore, a somewhat confusing use of language to speak of the 'formless planes,' when the very idea of a plane connotes differentiation, and therefore form. To be free of a thing does not mean that we turn our backs on it, or run from it, as the devil is said to run from holy water. The first condition of being free of a

thing is to be equally content whether we have it or have it not. To be free of form connotes the possibility of taking any form at will; to be free of change means that one is ever changing. True life is this power of freedom; to be stuck in one form of body, or feeling, or thought, to be incapable of change, is true death. That which is ever changing is that which is instantaneous in life, and therefore essentially superior to change; that which can take all forms is ever present in every moment of time, and alone is immortal.

From the point of view, then, of this mystic reality, or let us say of the man who is attempting perpetually to initiate himself into the gnosis of self-realisation, what meanings should be given to the theoretical and practical?

In the first place it would seem that, above all else, he should strive to value them equally, and so keep them in himself in perfect balance and poise, for his goal is the Birth of the Justified, the Birth of Horus. The theoretical, or contemplative, for him is the mode of his nature in which he conceives the living ideas of Truth, and the practical is the giving birth to these ideas in the actual. To know Truth, he must live Truth. To live Truth his thoughts, words and deeds must match; so alone can

Truth for him become instantaneous and immediate. There is then a straight path in himself from within without, and the without instantly becomes the within for him; reality is actualised as one and not as twain, as self and not as other, and Truth is all in all.

The practical is then no longer conditioned by his personal opinions and selfish sentiments; for the practical for him is now all that is being done, the karma of the world, the inevitable complement and completion of the theoretical—that is, the great plan and self-counsel of the Divine. With this Divine economy he now works naturally, and therefore contentedly, blissfully; for he recognises by experience that his co-working with Nature is the necessary condition of understanding, of spiritual gnosis. For Nature is wise, the Mother of wisdom, even as Wisdom is the Mother of nature; and the working with Nature brings wisdom to birth in man, and the working with Wisdom makes man's nature Divine.

The Divine impulse which has brought into existence the whole method of our modern science, which boasts itself so proudly to be the handmaid of the practical, is the innate longing in man to discover the secrets of Nature, that so he may know the laws of her

operations, and thus by working with them free himself from the bonds of ignorance.

If the present 'practical' of science very readily lends itself to subserving the selfish interests of man, this should not be a matter of much surprise. For whenever a great impulse starts in humanity, the first manifestations of it naturally disclose what appears to be the wrong side of things, or the topsy-turvydom of it. It is the manure which enriches the soil in which the true seed is sprouting.

And this may be seen very clearly in our own day, when a new and powerful interest has arisen in all that pertains to the soul. What may seem to many of us to be a degradation of all that should be most pure and holy, is the natural manuring of the soil. That on all sides amateur practitioners of 'occult arts,' and swarms of charlatans of all kinds, should have arisen to cater for public curiosity, and that books and articles and pamphlets and fly-sheets should be spawned forth in shoals, setting forth every nostrum under the sun with glaring self-advertisement, loudly extolling the advantages of 'business clairvoyance,' and—of course for a consideration—imparting tips for strengthening the will for 'business purposes,' etc., etc., and all the rest

of the 'occult' baits for the lovers of self-aggrandisement,—all this is only what the experienced would expect, and proves that the impulse is 'great.' It is the manuring of the soil, and the wrong side of the great impulse to make life practical and actual here and now.

Is it not also the same in no few branches of science herself? Is not physical science not infrequently made the handmaid of the false practical in the sense of commercial? The sympathies of the mystic and idealist must be all on the side of the famous discoverer of one of the rare elements, who when the ubiquitous and earth-bound interviewer asked him what was the practical application of his discovery, what was its value for commercial purposes, replied: No use whatever, thank God!

The seeker for mystic reality refuses to measure the practical by so low a canon; money-value is not a vital standard, but a corpse-measurer. It is not a natural but an artificial thing, and as such belongs to the region of death.

This, however, does not mean to say that commerce and business are not admirable means of training in the school of life; and perhaps one of the most comforting signs of

the present renaissance of mystic and psychic studies, and of endeavours to live the spiritual life, is that many men and women of business are found in the ranks; in fact, they may be said to form the majority.

Indeed, if we review the history of this movement for the last thirty years, we shall be compelled to recognise that it has been inspired by a strong desire to grapple with the facts of life, on the very battlefield of the struggle for existence. It differs from almost every movement of a similar nature in the past. Rarely do we find in it people who retire from the practical life of the world, or schemes to establish retreats and communities apart.

All this, I think, points to the fact that the inner determination of this new endeavour is that it should be really practical, and should labour to solve the problems while face to face with them. There is to be no retiring or retreating; heaven must be brought down to earth, that earth may be raised to heaven. Realisation to be of practical worth must be here and now; that which is not of practical worth is theoretically still-born, if not an abortion. The history of the mysticism of the past teems with these births out of due time that could not support the stress of the natural life of the world, and had to be kept

alive artificially. There have been broods of mystics who have had to live most of their time in semi-dream consciousness, or in artificial and cotton-wool surroundings; they have consequently been little able to affect the world.

Let us hope that this time a more natural brood will be reared, fit and eager, first to battle with circumstances, and then, when grown, ready so to use all circumstances with wisdom that they will be recognised, by all who have eyes to see, as the truly practical men of the world, controllers of every environment, in that by their plasticity and adaptability they can transmute the seemingly most inopportune circumstances into occasions for great happenings and god-like activity.

It should, however, never be forgotten that there is no necessity for anyone to put off the attempt to strive for self-realisation to some more favourable occasion, least of all for some other life when science and environment will have made conditions easier. This means simply being content to be re-born a 'mollusc.'

Self-realisation has been obtained by many a soul whose name has been set in the Book of the Heroes, millennia before modern science was heard of. Regeneration is a natural thing, not the product of the artificial mind moulded

by the opinions of the day. Indeed it is just this which ever distorts and atrophies the natural mind, which it is the whole duty of man to preserve in purity. For the natural mind is God-given, while the artificial mind is man-made.

But for the moment enough of this matter.

XVII.

THE DEATHLESS RACE.

Of late years the minds of many have been turning towards the thought of the birth of a new race. The idea is 'in the air,' as we say,—in the ambient; it is even with some becoming a lively expectation. It is natural, therefore, that speculations should be hazarded as to its nature and conjectures advanced as to its destiny.

Such an expectation is not out of keeping with the history of the development of humanity in the past. Nations are born from mankind and pass away into mankind; races appear and disappear, they come and go,—though indeed they never really go in the sense of vanishing entirely from the plasm of humanity, but only in the sense of disappearing to be worked up again into some other mode or fashioning of the mass. There is one body of humanity, and its great groups and classes of lives live and change according to laws that may well be called cosmic rather than individual; it is very difficult for

us to trace these changes in any precise fashion, for they are operated in a single plasm which changes itself and operates its changes in itself. It may be thought of as a 'watery' plasm, and its modes may with advantage be likened to the waves and currents and tides of the ocean.

But few are interested in this deeper side of the question. It is enough for the generality to be aware that there are great racial groups and sub-groups; many of us have, further, some practical knowledge of different nationalities. We also accept it as a general fact of knowledge that nationality is fundamentally a question of that mysterious fluid called 'blood'; but what determines any special strain of blood in the first place, so that it should be the chief physical conditioning of a special nation, we have no notion. At present this escapes the power of observation of our science, and the threadbare phrases of mechanical evolutionism give no real satisfaction to those who believe in the Divine ordering of the world-economy. At present the problem is too deep for the solution of the normal reason. Race is stronger than reason. This is true in a further sense as well, not only for the mass but also, except in rare instances, for the individual.

People of nations not of close kin have normally

great difficulty in really understanding one another; they 'feel' differently, and their feelings are stronger than their reason. It is this difference of feeling which prevents them entering into real intimacy; it would almost seem that an inner 'taboo' stronger than reason had been imposed upon them by a Reason greater than man's.

And indeed it has been said, and said wisely, that the heart is far older than the head, that it is 'blood' rather than 'brain,' the whole system rather than a special organ, that puts man in contact with the greater pulses of life and nature, and with intentions greater than his own. But to return to the notion of the birth of a new race.

In the past there have been very many instances of families and tribes which were at first nurtured apart so that they developed special characteristics; then, gathering strength and inspired with enterprise, they started on a career of expansion and conquest, and so developed into great nations.

Are we, then, to expect something of a like nature to occur in the future? If so, it might be thought, as some do think, that we have the coming nation with us already in Japan. Others again would have it that we are to look to Russia as mother of the coming race. But by

far the largest number has set its heart on the United States of America as holding forth the greatest promise for the future. Others again have their hopes centred in a renascence of the Celtic race as destined to a future of a prophetical and inspiring nature; while I know of some who are strongly convinced that Poland is to be the Messianic nation of Europe.

For myself I hope that not only these nations but many others will in the near future realise a greater life and usefulness; but somehow or other I cannot but think that some greater happening lies behind the expectations that are stirring.

Every nation that has accomplished anything, has been inspired with a feeling of its own strength and superiority; its life has surged to greater expansion and expression. The nations have shown forth many and varied characteristics; and among them a few have been conspicuous for their devotion to what may be termed the cult of wisdom. For instance, the Greeks, while naturally proud of their own special culture, their philosophy and art, nevertheless freely acknowledged the deeper 'wisdom' of Egypt and Chaldæa. Again, no few nations have thought themselves specially chosen of God; and of these we may take as the best-known

instances of our own day the Brāhmans (with the allied castes) and the Jews.

It can hardly be that belief in their high destiny alone has preserved these two races from extinction at the hands of disintegrating forces, which, especially in the case of the Hebrews, should, to all human seeming, have long ago proved overwhelming. Both have survived in spite of repeated conquest, and, in the case of the Jews, in spite of the most terribly repressive measures as well. We seem, then, almost forced to believe that their survival must be due to some peculiar force of resistance implanted in the stock from its beginnings, something conditioning the quality of its blood.

However this may be, it is a most striking fact that in both cases, out of this exclusiveness, there have proceeded, and proceeded in spite of the innate racial tendency to keep itself apart, two of the most actively propagandising and universalising religions of the world—Buddhism and Christianity.

Both religions have preached a totally different view of the Chosen Race from that believed in by orthodox Brāhman or orthodox Jew. The orthodox of both races have believed that the 'choice' has been entirely a question of blood; and that the Deity has settled the matter once

for all by the fact of their being born physically Brāhmans or Israelites. But the Light of the Gnosis in both East and West preached a universal gospel, the antipodes of this narrow particularism. The true Brāhman was declared to be he who was a Knower of the Divine (Brahmavid) and a Doer of the Law, and the true Righteous he who was the Servant of God and Co-worker with Deity, chosen out of every nation under heaven. The whole notion was removed to another plane; it was referred to a deeper consciousness.

Leaving the East as less familiar, it is of advantage to recall how, out of the many forms of early Messianic expectation in Israel, which all looked to the material well-being and supremacy of the nation as the only satisfactory fulfilment of the promises of its prophets, there gradually grew up among the most enlightened of the Jews a truly spiritual view—that the Israel of God was to consist of the Righteous of all the nations. This fair expectation Christianity adopted, believing that it was to be fulfilled in its grandiose ideal of a truly Catholic Church; but it speedily fell from the height of this splendid vision, for instead of believing that the true Church must *ipso facto* already consist of the Righteous of all nations, of those who do the will of God, its theologians

insisted on the holding of a special form of belief as the primary condition of membership in their Church, and so the Light was obscured.

Now once more, as in the days of the Buddha and the Christ, men's minds are beginning to turn towards the expectation of greater things, and the notion of the impending birth of a new race is one of the signs of the new age. It is highly probable that there is to be a new race, and not only one but many new races, as there have been already in the past; but surely we should not allow our attention to narrow itself down to such a comparative detail, if at least we would escape falling far short of the great expectation of the past!

Neither the Christ nor the Buddha spoke of some special race (in the ordinary sense of the word) which should be the specially Chosen of God; so that one might point to a nation of people living in some district in the world and say: This is the Holy Race. Both Buddha and Christ not only preached but exemplified a deeper mystery—they showed forth the Deathless Race in their own persons and their lives.

It is, indeed, a reasonable expectation that the future races of mankind will exhibit nobler characteristics, higher culture, and truer civilisa-

tion; but there is no need to wait for their appearance to instruct us as to the manner and nature of the Deathless Race. Both the Christ and the Buddha taught and exemplified the Glad Tidings of the Living Gnosis—that man here and now can attain to Birth into Deathlessness; for whether this be called the attainment of Nirvāṇa or the inheriting the Kingdom of God, it is all one and the same mystery—the Divinising or Apotheōsis of man. Those thus Divinely born are all of one Race, without distinction of race; they are all kin of one and the same Blood. The Sons of the Race are always somewhere in the world, have perchance always been somewhere in the world, as long as our humanity has existed.

They who have once been born into this Race no longer die, no longer are under the compulsion of being born into this or that race; they are free of birth and death, and come and go according to the Divine Order, where obedience to Law is freedom from law.

The Great Expectation, then, is that Birth into the Deathless Race may be realised here and now, as it has been realised already by the Divinised of humanity. Sometimes it is said that this consummation is but the anticipation of the natural fruitage of humanity, and that the majority of our humanity will some day reach

this stage in the normal progress of evolution. This may be so, though we cannot help thinking that there must still be a marked difference; we agree, however, that the transformation must be natural and not artificial. The growth and birth can be hastened, but they must be hastened naturally; and the preparation of the soul for the natural hastening of this growth into Divine manhood is first and foremost the wise cultivation of the moral nature. This is the 'good ground' in which the Divine seed is implanted.

All this is as old as the teachings of the Sons of the Race, for they taught what they knew in their own nature, and therefore with authority. For most of us, however, morality is synonymous with discipline and restraint, at best a spiritual asceticism, while for no few the whole subject as generally set forth in pulpit and tract is a dull business, which fails to arrest the attention or excite the imagination.

But for the mystic such terms as 'good ground' and 'sowing,' and the rest, are not purely figures of speech, not simply metaphors and analogies; they are words of power and actuality that directly set forth certain master-facts of the spiritual life, which are of the most intensely romantic nature as well as ever new and glorious realities.

The 'resurrection of the body,' for instance, the raising into incorruption that which is sown in corruption, as Paul so well expresses it, is a master-fact. For it is the coming to birth in his body of the essential plasm of man's deepest nature, the actualising of the perfect body of incorruption within the physical body of corruption; so that the new-born knows, by actual experience, that he is new-made in all his nature in countless ways that would seem truly miraculous to the 'dead'—that is to say, to those who have not yet risen into that height or plunged into that depth.

It is thus that the language of morals as used by the Sons of the Race is a language of living fact, descriptive of the conditions in which are brought to birth actualities transcending expression in words understood of normal man. Viewed from this point of view, morality as set forth by knowers of such mysteries becomes the most fascinating subject in the world, the greatest of sciences, the art of arts. It is the self-preparation and self-conception whereby the man is to bring himself to birth into the Deathless Race, so that he may live in humanity as a whole, and not as a separated unit, though he still have a body as before. It is a science far deeper than the science of the schools, an art far subtler than the arts of men; for it is

immediately inspired by the God who broods over the chaotic 'waters' of the passional nature in every man, and finally brings forth from them that harmony and truth which has been called "the mystery that is made the type of the Race."

The expectation that is beginning to awaken among us to-day is great, for we are beginning to look for great things. And if we look forward we also look back; and there, in the past, even in the small range now known to history, we see that the religious consciousness of the world has been marked by two specially great epochs, when numbers were encouraged by the might of the Presence among them to hope superhumanly and strive Divinely. In the days of the Buddha and of the Christ hearts were bursting with joyful hope, and glory was shining through the very bodies of the 'births-of-matter' that were being transmuted into 'births-of-light.' Can it be that a similar epoch is near at hand again? Echoes of rumours from within and indications of signs from without are not wanting for the watchful and attentive. But far be it from us to expect ignorantly in ignorant forms, as, for instance, the ignorant expected last time a physical appearance of their Lord in the air as a second coming. Let us rather be looking in the right direction, as the

wise looked in the past in the midst of many ignorant expectations, and expect as they did, or if it be possible in forms of even more immediate actuality. And lest we should be thought by some to be imagining something new we may, in conclusion, set down some fragments of what the wiser of the faithful expected at the last great epoch.

Thus a Jewish Mystic, writing in all probability at the very beginning of the Christian era, announces the great fact of the Presence of the Spirit that was then actualising in the hearts of many, when he declares:

"One is the Nature Below which is subject to Death; and one is the Race without a king which is born Above." *

The Nature Below is contrasted with the Race born Above, that is, from Above, or Re-generate. The one is corruptible and subject to death, the mortal nature of man; the other is not subject to death or any other Ruler. It is a Race immortal and free; for those thus born are kings of themselves, they have attained unto spiritual kingship, which is also the kingship of the heavens and the earths, and thus won to Kinship with the Gods.

A little later in the same document a Christian

* For the references, see *The Gnostic Crucifixion*, pp. 48 ff.; *Echoes from the Gnosis*, vol. vii.

Gnostic speaks of this same Race as "the ineffable Race of perfect men"—ineffable, because no human speech is capable of expressing its glorious nature; indeed "all the books in the world," as it has been phrased, would be insufficient to express a 'momentary' experience of those who can, as it were, read the nature-pages of the world-life in the twinkling of an eye, in a moment of transcendent actuality, when the within and the without kiss each other in the mystic union of perfect realisation.

Again, prior to the preaching of Christianity, Philo of Alexandria, repeating what he had learned from those *Cultores et Cultrices Dei* whom he calls Therapeuts, or Servants or Worshippers of God, tells us that: "Wisdom, who, after the fashion of a mother, brings forth the Self-taught Race, declares that God is the Sower of it."

For the Therapeuts and Gnostics Wisdom was not only the Divine Mother, but also the spiritual substance of the world and of the individual, that is, the essential ground of man's moral nature, the wise or knowing essence of the perfect body. 'Wisdom' for the Therapeuts stood also for the tradition of a living gnosis which had been handed down in scriptural succession.

The Deathless Race is Self-taught, that is, God-taught, in a truly Divine and immediate manner that transcends all human ideas of instruction. In a striking passage of the Trismegistic Gnosis—a passage which uses the same terms and sets forth at greater length the same deep knowledge which Philo hands on in the above-cited passage, one of the Self-taught reveals the secret to his disciple in the words:

"This Race, my son, is never taught; but when He willeth it, its memory is restored by God."

That is to say, the Divine consciousness comes to birth in the man. Precisely the same idea is found in the Buddhist tradition; the term 'Asekha' is used of the one who has no further need of human instruction, of him who is being born into the perfection of the Nirvāṇic state.

But before this consummation can be reached, certain degrees of discipline must be scaled, according to both the Eastern and Western traditions of the Wisdom. Thus Philo, referring to these degrees of 'discipline and instruction,' writes:

"They who have passed beyond these introductory exercises, becoming natural disciples of God, receiving Wisdom free from all toil, migrate

to this Incorruptible and Perfect Race, receiving a lot superior to their former lives in genesis."

Believers in reincarnation may, if they choose, read into these words a deep under-meaning, and thus see in them the triumph of the Victor, who wins his freedom from the necessity of Saṁsāra, the ever-recurring necessity of physical birth-and-death; instead of being under the compulsion of this continual 'transmigration,' the perfected man once for all 'migrates' into the condition of the Deathless Race and realises the Freedom of the Divine.

So also in the Christian Gnosis, the converted Soul prays that the Image of Light—the Divine Similitude in which the Spirit of man is configured by means of his innermost essence—may no longer be turned or averted from her; though indeed it is never so averted of itself, but only according to our aversion from it. She prays that "those who turn in the lower regions"—that is, again, in one meaning, the souls in transmigration—may be regarded; or in other words that the Sun of Life, the True Self, may shine upon them; and this is characterised as "the mystery which is made the type of the Race"—that is to say, the mystery of the New Birth, the making Divine or Divinising of man in Self-realisation.

In another document of the same tradition of

the Gnosis, referring in one sense, it may be, to the assembly of the man's past lives, on the Great Day 'Come unto Us,' we are told that:

"The births-of-matter rejoiced that they had been remembered, and were glad that they had come out of the narrow and difficult place"—which perhaps may mean the bonds of personality.

At this Great Moment the 'births-of-matter,' now become powers, are said to have prayed to the Hidden Mystery "whose Race no man can tell, whose manifestation no man can comprehend":

"Give us authority that we may create for ourselves æons and worlds, according to Thy word upon which Thou didst agree with Thy servant!"

How, we ask, could such sublime conceptions have been designed by the unaided mind of man? Must it not be that it was because men at that time reached to states that far transcend the normal mind, and so directly contacted their own Divinity, that they were able to write such daring scripture? And if it were possible in those days, why may it not be possible also in our own days for some others to win towards Birth into this Deathless Race and so make audible some echoes of its glories?

This at any rate seems to me to be the Great Expectation that is now giving birth to the many little expectations of our day. The existence of the Deathless Race is being recalled to mind in many ways; memory is beginning to return, some are beginning to awake.

XVIII.

MYSTIC COSMOGONY.

COSMOGONY, we are told in one of our most recent books of reference, is "a theory concerning the origin ('begetting') of the world; the mythological or ante-scientific view, as preserved in the traditions, oral or written, and the folk-poetry of primitive and ancient peoples." *

We are further informed, by the same authority, that "the original cosmogonies are spontaneous productions of folk-fancy, and are therefore unsystematic, forming as a rule only a chapter in the theogonies and genealogies of the gods. Systematisation is a sign that primitive notions have been subjected to treatment in the interest of a certain theology or advanced religious consciousness."

Nevertheless, even when systematised, cosmogonies, being 'ante-scientific,' are outside the pale of serious consideration as a contribution to any genuine knowledge of the world-process;

* Dr Emil G. Hirsch, art. 'Cosmogony,' *The Jewish Encyclopædia.*

they are of value solely as material in which to trace the history of the evolution of 'fancy,' prior to the birth of the first-hand study of Nature by the scientific method.

This judgment now applies not only to the cosmogonies of all ancient and primitive peoples, but also to those creation-accounts, in the Jewish Bible, which were held by Jew and Christian for so many centuries to be the immediate and inerrant revelation of Divine knowledge.

Thus Prof. Hirsch tells us that "the cosmogony—or, to be more exact, the cosmogonies —of the Bible must be viewed and analysed according to the light derived from comparison with similar conceits among non-Hebrews."

Notice the term 'similar conceits,' and also that Dr Hirsch is a Rabbi as well as Professor of Rabbinical Literature and Philosophy at the University of Chicago.

In another recent book of reference of high repute, the present position is laid down even more strictly.

"It may be regarded as an axiom of modern study that the descriptions of creation contained in the biblical records . . . are permanently valuable only in so far as they express certain religious truths which are still recognised as such. To seek for even a kernel of historical fact in such cosmogonies is inconsistent with a

scientific point of view. We can no longer state the critical problem thus: How can the biblical cosmogony be reconciled with the results of natural science? The question to be answered is rather this: From what source have the cosmogonic ideas expressed in the Old Testament been derived?"*

This may be thought by some to be an extreme position, but the reasonable conservatives who call themselves moderates do but confirm it. "Biblical apologetic is proceeding on false lines when it seeks to constrain the biblical narrative into harmony with the results of modern science."†

If, then, the biblical accounts of cosmogony, on which so much labour and ingenuity have been expended by scholars of all schools—conservative, moderate, liberal and revolutionary—cannot be reconciled with the results of modern science, it goes without saying that no other cosmogony stands the slightest chance of a hearing before the bar of modern culture.

But, in spite of this, may not the mystic still venture to inquire whether, after all, the mythological way of representation may not foreshadow a reality underlying the facts which

* Zimmern, art. 'Creation,' *Encyclopædia Biblica.*

† Rev. Owen C. Whitehouse, art. 'Cosmogony,' Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

the scientific method boasts itself to be discovering for the first time?

Speaking generally, and postulating that we have now only the *débris* of the past by which to judge, we would have the hardihood still to believe that mythologic cosmogony *did* adumbrate certain vital facts of the world-process, whereas modern science, for all her tireless searching and her analysis of the appearances of Nature, has to confess that life for ever escapes her.

Cosmogony follows on theogony. The world-fashioning has its genesis in the vital energies of the Divine Mind. Antiquity conceived these vital energies as intelligences, and 'personified' them. The latter term is generally used in this connection as an indication of the fanciful nature of the ancient mind; antiquity dreamed the gods into existence; they are the 'baseless fabric' of its childish fantasy. And yet those who thus speak, who are ever ready to point out what they consider to be the foolishness of days gone by, are frequently the same minds who elaborate a subtle theory concerning the 'Person' of the Deity, and insist upon it that it is precisely this 'Personality' that is the most divine element in the God of their love.

May it not, then, be that it is precisely the

same instinct in man that is expressing itself in both instances? That in the root-notion, the living idea, which lies hid behind the word 'person,' behind the 'mask,' there is a profound truth; and that without this creative power of imagination, the power of clothing oneself in the image of oneself, there would be no world of manifestation at all?

At any rate this is how some of the great cosmogonies have set forth the beginnings of things: the Divine first clothes Himself in the Image of Himself.

So also with man; he first clothes the gods in the image of his own innermost nature; he personifies them as modes of his own greater consciousness.

All this was native to him when he still felt himself kin with Nature; when he felt rather than thought, when he followed instinct rather than ratiocination. But for long centuries this feeling of kinship with Nature has been gradually weakened by the powerful play of that form of mind peculiar to man; until he has at last reached a stage when he finds himself largely divorced from Nature, to such an extent indeed that he treats her as something foreign and apart from himself. He has now developed the power of self-separation to a very remarkable degree; to such a stage

indeed that he can no longer in any way feel with the feelings of the men of antiquity. His forebears have become complete strangers to him; almost as difficult for him to understand as the animals.

He seems at present, at any rate in the persons of most of the accredited thinkers of the West, to be absolutely convinced that no other mode of mind can exist except his own mode. That mind is of many modes, that all modes are native to the Great Mind, that man has in him the promise and potency of all these modes, he will not believe. To say that Nature thinks, he regards as an entire misuse of language, 'mere' metaphor, and poetic rhapsody, of absolutely no scientific value. That Nature has feelings even, he will not allow; to speak of love and hate among the elements is for him a puerile fancy the cultured mind has long outgrown. The sole joy of such a mind would almost seem to be the delight of expelling the life from all forms and dissecting their dead bodies.

Far otherwise was it with the men of antiquity. They felt more widely and more deeply, in greater waves of emotion, and so they imagined more freely and more fluidly. They were, in brief, more on the life-side of things than on the form-side. The marvellous

microscopic mind of minute detail had not yet been evolved. Perhaps we may be allowed to call these phases the Fluid and the Crystal Age respectively.

That the methods employed for the instruction of mankind in these two ages should be very different, calls for no surprise; indeed, it is just what we should expect. The chief requisite of the earlier age was that its feelings and its fancies should be given full scope and satisfaction; the people were vastly more natural than they are to-day, and therefore far more psychic, though in a fluid and indefinite matter. The present age, on the contrary, seeks satisfaction in such matters for its mind alone. It no longer seeks life, but light; its one aim is so to polish the facets of its mind that they shall reflect the light with ever greater brilliance. It therefore excludes all feeling and emotion, which are of a 'watery' nature, as the deadliest foes of science; and hence its antagonism to religion, which largely preserves the old way of instruction, and in so doing appeals to what, in most cases, is a deeper and more elemental side of man's nature than his comparatively lately evolved reason,—to something far more ancient in him than the new mode of mind he has been so busily creating for himself, and which

now by its adamantine hardness and its clear-cut facets reflects so brilliant a light, that he is dazzled into thinking this reflected light cast on external objects is far more precious than the deep life that is within him, and penetrates to his inmost being.

Strange as it may appear to the modern mind, whose one ambition is to harden and formalise itself, so that it may reflect the light with ever greater brilliance, the ancient mind conceived of knowledge in a totally different fashion. It did not crystallise itself into a hardened point, but, remaining fluid, knew that the mode of knowledge suitable to its nature was by intercourse and blending. Its experience was, according to the universal teaching of the past, that it could blend with intelligences greater than itself, that it could have intercourse with the gods. This, in most general terms, and as applied to the greater minds of antiquity, is the ground of experience on which all genuine mythological recitals are based.

But here we must distinguish the myths based on genuine experience of this nature, from the faulty copies of the originals which were put into circulation by those who had no immediate experience of their own, and which in course of time, owing to the imperfect nature

of the means of transmission, almost entirely lost their original lineaments. The myths preserved by the initiates of antiquity differed widely from the myths in circulation among the people. Very few of the former have come down to us, and even these few in greatly disfigured form; the folk-myths and folk-tales, however, abound, and from them modern scholarship pronounces its judgment on the whole.

In this adventure we are paying attention only to the method of genuine mythology as based on experience; the history of the utilisation of the original material in the interests of national or priestly pretensions, though of the greatest interest, may be passed over.

The root-idea was that man is not separate from the universe, and that in considering the begetting of the universe man is in reality considering his own greater begetting. But more than this; the story, though set forth in terms of time, is in reality an eternal history; it is always going on, and the only way of truly understanding it is by experiencing it.

As is now well known to many, the end at which the genuine mystic aimed, was to bring to birth his own true cosmic body, and thus to become a god; in other words, the re-generation of himself required that he should first

experience all the stages of cosmogenesis in his own nature. Just as in mythological science there were the successive stages of theogony, cosmogony, and anthropogenesis, so in the ascending scale of the Return there was a cosmogenesis and a theogenesis. To-day we hear much of the birth of 'cosmic consciousness.' But it is nothing new; it is the old, old secret. For cosmic consciousness, for contact with the Great Soul of things, man must first develop in himself a cosmic organism; and so gradually bring himself to birth as Man-God, being made kin with the Great Mind.

This is the innermost secret adumbrated in the Greater Mysteries of antiquity. Countless terms may be used, innumerable details may be elaborated, but it is always one and the same mystery that is veiled and revealed. There is a coming forth, a turn, and a return. The coming forth is in ignorance, the return in knowledge,—that is, in vital experience. Seeing that this 'ascent' is a continual giving-birth to one's greater self, the ground-experience on the way of return is always of the nature of an 'orderly' development, a 'cosmo'-genesis. Thus, for the spiritually initiated of antiquity, the myths of world-genesis did not simply tell the story of the birth of a universe external to himself, but rather revealed the mode in

which his own universe was generated within himself.

It was because of their ignorance of this great truth of spiritual initiation that we find the following rebuke to His disciples put in the mouth of the Master in a Christian Gnostic Gospel:

"How long shall I bear with you, how long shall I suffer you? Do ye still not know and are ye ignorant? Know ye not, and do ye not understand, that ye are all angels, all archangels, gods and lords, all rulers, all the great invisibles, all those of the Midst, those of every region of them that are on the Right, all the great ones of the emanations of the Light with all their glory; that ye are all, of yourselves and in yourselves in turn, from one mass and one matter and one substance?"*

To most of us, shut off as we are from the depth of our being by an impermeable surround of false opinion and unhealthy habit—habits of life and thought which are so powerful that they have now become, not only our second, but our first nature—such echoes of the ancient mystery-teaching appear to be the fevered dreams of an enthusiastic imagination that vanish in the clear day of scientific fact.

But there are a few who, either owing to a

* *Pistis Sophia*, 247, 248.

certain Divine grace, or, what is the same thing, the restoration of a certain memory deeper far than the impressions of our physical consciousness, recognise in these echoes the sound of a Voice that utters words of highest truth and deepest wisdom.

To such, these words are words of power which open up vistas of a Vision so glorious, that they yearn with all their souls to burst the bonds of the prison of habit of thought and life in which they now feel themselves enchained. For the heart in them cries out as the disciples in the Gnostic Gospel:

"When, therefore, the Saviour had said these words the disciples came forward and cried out all together, saying:

"'O Saviour, Thou excitest us with exceeding great frenzy because of the transcendent Height which Thou hast revealed unto us; and Thou exaltest our souls, and they have become paths, on which we travel to come unto Thee, for they came forth from Thee. Now, therefore, because of the transcendent heights which Thou hast revealed unto us, our souls have become frenzied, and they travail mightily, yearning to go forth from us into the Height to the Region of Thy Kingdom.'" *

This is the Divine frenzy, the Divine love-

* *Pistis Sophia*, 279, 280.

passion of the soul, the stirring within the depths of the ocean of our being that shall in time bring forth the Perfection—"all in all, out of all powers composed."

Cosmogony thus conceived becomes of vital and immediate interest. It is no longer a question of correspondence and analogy simply, as when we say: Even as man develops from the germ-cell, so does the universe come forth from the cosmic egg. It is the intuition of a far more intimate reality. The *mystēs* of this way dares to declare, that in very truth, in his actual body, worlds and world-systems are at every moment coming into and passing out of existence; that the infinitely small and the infinitely great are in actuality not really distinguished by size or length of days, but that the within and the without in themselves match and mingle eternally. Let him but actualise himself, and the 'carapace of self-hood,' the limit that now presses on him, will be dissolved, and within and without will blend in the perfect union of self-realisation.

Now the whole tendency of modern thought and modern life is to make that limit ever more and more rigid. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance to shake off this tyranny; but in order to do so we must first realise that it exists. If we do not feel it as limitation

and constriction, we cannot even begin to shake ourselves free.

But if we do feel it, we should bestir ourselves, by every means in our power, to free ourselves from the *māyā* of present opinion, and to slip off the habits of the things to which we have grown used. And one of the most useful means that lies ready to hand, is joyfully to bathe ourselves in the vital waters of the best sources we possess, and deeply to breathe in the atmosphere of the highest inspiration that has been vouchsafed to us.

Mystic cosmogony is thus a subject of the greatest interest and importance; for we are compelled at every moment to be overstepping the borderland of the present state of scientific observation and hypothesis, and to enter a domain of thought and experience that is of a truly cosmic nature, in comparison with our present human limitations.

But many of us have not the mental equipment suited to this study, and cry out: This thing is too hard for me! It is quite true that, on one side, the study of cosmogony calls for the greatest intellectual acumen, and a wide knowledge of all that modern science can teach us. But there is another side. Intellectual knowledge is one thing, but vital gnosis is another. Cosmogony can be made the subject of contemplation.

Let the lover of these things once realise that the hidden nature of cosmogony is as we have described, and a new way of approach begins gradually to present itself.

The mind, as we have said, is not only of one mode; it is not only of the nature of human formal intellect, as that term is generally understood, but also of the nature of intelligence, of those deeper instincts that feel after greater things, rather than endeavour to compel these to accommodate themselves to the configuration of our present mind-forms. This intelligence is the feminine, fluid and vital, mode of mind, and in itself it is formless, and therefore able to receive and conceive living ideas, incurious of successions in time and processions in space.

Mystic cosmogony, not only may be taken as speaking about cosmic things, but it can also be treated from the point of view of union; it can be taken as teaching about the happenings within the substance of man at the moment prior to becoming 'cosmic,' the beginning of the Christ-birth, after the Immaculate Conception. For just as the worlds have periods of being built and being unbuilt, so in man's substance and nature is there an unbuilding and a building at all great moments.

In normal birth, there is in the mother-body

a cessation of activity in certain directions, for certain periods, before the birth of an offspring. So also in the genesis of 'cosmic' consciousness, is there a cessation of periodicity in the mother-substance of the man, prior to the birth of that greater consciousness, which heralds the birth of true unity. There is a change of direction in man's innermost substance. The birth of universal awareness, the consciousness of wholes, must be the birth of a world. Every mind has its own direction, every person has his scope of vision or awareness; and when anyone attains to a consciousness of the whole, he does bring to birth in a sense a new world—yet it is the same world.

In brief, mystic cosmogony may be considered as setting forth the birth of a man's own true world at his initiation from the small into that which is the Great; his passing from the lesser mysteries of generation into the Greater Mystery of Re-generation, from man to Super-man, and thence to Christ.

XIX.

SOME ELEMENTARY SPECULATIONS.

For the purpose of this adventure, I would be so bold as to presume to convert the word 'speculation' to its original meaning of intelligent interpretation, or observation or inspection. It was once a word of dignity and connoted, we are told, "the pursuit of truth by means of thinking, especially mathematical reasoning and logical analogies; meditation; deep and thorough consideration of a theoretical question." In brief, it was a synonym of the Greek 'theory' (θεωρία), and its proper use pertains to the theoretic or contemplative life; it is a genuine mystical exercise, and perhaps the basis of a scientific practice.

I propose, then, to speculate, in order to bring into clearer definition some obscure notions, which many who are interested in 'psychic' subjects, accept without further inquiry.

It is very confusing to use the same term to connote things that differ from each other fundamentally. One of such terms of prolific

confusion is the word 'plane.' It is indiscriminately used for varying grades of matter and modes of consciousness which come under one fundamental law, and also for others that differ fundamentally and are not bound by the law of manifestation.

If we would seek to suggest to ourselves the fundamental mode of manifestation, it must, I think, be sought for under the general notion of that 'blessed word' vibration, of which so much is said and so little understood. The root-meaning of the term is connected with the idea of movement to and fro; in physics it is said to denote "an oscillating, reciprocating, or any kind of stationary motion made by a body, as a pendulum, musical cord, electric plate, or mass of air, when forced from the position, figure or volume of equilibrium, under the influence of forces of resistance."

The simplest example of vibration is that of a string stretched between two fixed points, set in motion by an applied force; and this may serve as a very suggestive indication of the law that obtains on the planes of manifestation —that is, how everything works, below the unitary state or state of wholeness, in the realms of duality or of the special or partial universe; it may be figured by two points, one at each end of an imaginary straight line.

As for the modes of sight conditioned by this law, they may be all, both normal and extra-normal, appropriately called by some general term. There can doubtless be varying degrees of such sight; indeed there seems no reason why they should not be varied indefinitely. But so long as the 'theorist' keeps his laws fundamentally the same for all such varying degrees of sight, they should be more appropriately called by some generic term, than by such designations as etheric, psychic, mental, and so forth; for they are all founded on vibration and the fundamental essence which may appropriately be called ether.

The first suggestion for one who desires to become a 'speculator' of things as they are, is that he should endeavour to obtain a clear insight into the nature of the fundamental difference between those modes of sight that are conditioned by a law founded on principles of vibration, or motion between two stationary points, and those modes that are fundamentally other than these. The fundamental law of this otherness must, in the nature of things, be quite different from that of the normal physical modes. It is the nature of this otherness of consciousness that should be speculated upon, by those who desire to obtain just notions of something other than physical, both dense and

subtle; for many seem to take etheric to mean just simply a thinner physical, and so for the rest. To get to this otherness the speculator, it would seem, will have to turn himself entirely inside out, so to speak; for the state he strives to realise will be conditioned by laws fundamentally opposed to all known laws on the physical plane. We might thus speculate that, perchance, it is founded on a law that may be symbolised by a point in the middle of a sphere.

It would be much easier for men to pass from one phase, or plane, of the first world of sight, or consciousness, than to attain to this second world. For in the former all are modes of the same principle by which we see on the physical. But the latter world would be utterly different, because founded on a different law.

The principal planes, or main phases, of the former might be said to be like earth, stones and houses; while the latter would be like water. But however hard a man may try to construct upon his normal experience, the state of otherness should refuse to obey the laws of normal objective observation. It is better to think of abstract nouns, and so by adding together all the ideas one can get on the formal human plane, endeavour to *deduce* flow, life, meaning. It is no good trying to *construct*; if you find

yourself constructing, you may be reasonably sure you are far from the state of otherness. This otherness is rather a 'plane' of life; it does not construct. And by 'construct' is meant a verb that suggests form, or 'death,' differentiation, difference, separated ideas; by 'life,' on the contrary, is meant a unifying principle.

In the one mode, our universe is outside us, our energies or currents flow exwards to external objects; in the other, they are within, our whole universe is inside, within the consciousness.

The former state may be symbolised by an ellipse or egg, the latter by a circle or sphere.

To get from one state to the other, the line of consciousness between the two foci should be made to disappear; the two points should draw together until they blend into one. The change that thus occurs, might then be thought of under the imagery of what we may call swirls, or self-centred monads, each perpetually turning itself inside out, so to say—expanding into a sphere and contracting into a point, in such a mode that we cannot possibly find two foci in the system. This is in one sense the mystic 'atom'; and atoms, it is said, are the things in the world of men that contact the world of the gods. And by 'atom' is here meant the reduction of a thing to such minuteness that it will not go any smaller, however much we apply the same process. It

then becomes the point where things begin to grow 'great' again—that is, upon the gods' side of life.

It is, however, a mistake to imagine that what are generally called 'higher planes,' cannot in any way be understood by normal people who are not psychic. For there is always something on the physical to correspond with things on such 'higher planes'; and if a man has got the mind to understand physical things, he can understand, though he cannot experience, extra-physical things; and if things are in exactly the same ratio, they are practically the same.

To get unstuck from the normal, some such kindergarten amusement might be suggested as the following: Draw a beetle from a man's point of view, and then draw a man from a beetle's point of view. And don't forget that a beetle's mind is most probably instinctual and not formal. Then ask yourself the question: What is the difference between a man and a beetle? Does either of the drawings attempted *really* represent a man or a beetle?

Supposing your eyes were not in your head, but in your toes; what would the room look like? Draw it. Supposing your toe-nails were all eyes; what would the world look like—the world of the room? There would not be any carpet, in the first place, because that would be at the

back of your head. It would be mostly ceiling, very little else. After making a series of such experiments, and so getting to another point of view, we might proceed, with an unprejudiced mind, and with the added freedom of a new contact with things, to ask ourselves the pertinent question: Why on earth do we put our furniture at the bottom of the room?—the reason for which will be clearer a little later on.

Now you cannot see what is next you; you see what is opposite you. That is because seeing may be compared with vibration between two points. Why cannot we see our own faces? Are we quite sure this is impossible? We have our two points, and no dense material in between, so we ought then to be able to see our own faces!

But is there such a possibility as physical sight by means of curved lines? If there be, it is quite legitimate to employ the term 'physical' for such sight, and far less confusing than to use the word 'astral,' as is sometimes done; for that only makes people get vague and without ideas, as it suggests something super-physical.

Let us say, for the moment, that normal physical sight is seeing by means of two 'points,' one active and the other passive, between which it is possible to draw a straight line.

Then this other physical sight, the so-called

'psychic,' may be represented by two points between which you cannot draw a straight line, but can draw a curved line!

Similarly, so-called 'mental' sight is imagining yourself somewhere where your body is not, and thus being able to see the object with 'physical' sight.

This is a kindergarten suggestion of how these sights work, and not a showing of the results.

Supposing you look at a cube edgeways instead of directly at one face of it; the object entirely changes. It is a different shape; light and shade change, and proportion changes.

Here 'shape' may be called physical; 'light and shade' so-called 'astral'; and proportion so-called 'mental.'

And here we ask another test question: What is perspective fundamentally? This is an admirable subject of speculation. Those capable of thinking out perspective scientifically, should be able to help us to understand, or at any rate to think profitably about the way, for instance, Egyptians and Chinese drew and draw. Is it possibly because they saw and see perspective from a different point of view, and not solely a question of ignorance, as is generally supposed? May not something happen in our minds which alters the mental view, that is, the proportions of objects? May not perspective be mental, not

actual? Must not all perspective be 'rubbed out' before we can get 'outside' form? To get 'outside form,' however, in such speculation does not mean giving up form and becoming blank; it would seem rather to mean freedom from any special point of view, from any convention of perspective.

But to proceed to speculate further. May there not be regions of the universe other than the physical state known to us—regions where, for instance, spheres may be stationary and will not roll, and where cubes — the most stable forms of our physical — roll directly the law which holds things together in that space is displaced?

To obtain some notion of such a topsy-turvy state of affairs, we may indulge in the kindergarten exercise of trying to imagine, on the physical plane, what difference it would make if such a state of affairs obtained.

Chairs, for instance, would not have legs; for if they had, they would roll directly they were touched.

A further exercise to test the ingenuity, adaptability and plasticity of the mind, would be to try to think about surface in this connection—flat surfaces and curved surfaces and their effect on spheres and cubes.

If on a flat surface—a plane—resistance and

pressure are less for, let us say, 'balls' than for what we may call 'flats.' What sort of surface, then, will it be where the reverse is the case? What is the nature of curved space?

And here one might take 'surface' in a deeper meaning; it need not be necessarily confined to the geometrical concept of superficies, but extended to mean something more resembling the notion suggested by the vaguely used term 'plane' to denote states of matter other than the normal physical. The term 'plane' in this sense, however, might perhaps be better defined as 'field of action.'

In topsy-turvy land, then, houses would have to be built like balls; and indeed that is precisely the idea of matter which has been suggested by some mathematical speculators—the round-shot theory; the shape of the space between, interstitial space, must also be speculated upon.

Trains and carriages, that is to say, things on wheels in our physical world, would there have to be cube-shaped, or would run on cubes, or flats of some kind. Houses and beds would have to be spherical, so that they might not run away in the night!

'Water' would be the 'earth' of this topsy-turvy plane. All 'water' there would be fixed; 'earth' would be mobile. Things of like nature cannot interpenetrate; so-called 'astral' beings

are said to be unable to pass through 'water,' though they can pass through brick walls quite easily. 'Water' is the material of their own bodies, so resists them, or is held together by the same power as that by which they are held together.

Imagine, therefore, all water fixed, rigid, all earth like sand, capable or possible of readjustment. Let us imagine all the objects in our world made of sand, so that it were possible for us to force our way through them if we wanted to, but when we had passed through them, they would reassume their normal shape, just as water does on the normal physical plane.

There are, it is said, beings who are as much held back by water, as men by earth, because they are of water—water-born ; just as physical man is of earth—earth-born.

In our physical world, when things are flat, balls do not move; it is when the surface is tilted, or diagonal, or curved, that the force which binds things together, is what we call displaced, and things begin to move.

On the 'water' plane it is just the reverse. 'Curves' are the rule ; it is the normal angle at which the force of the plane holds things in equilibrium. If one would move on the 'water' plane, he has to know how to make curves flats ;

then he begins to move at once without using any force, just as in the physical world a ball rolls downhill, because it cannot help it.

It is, then, a good speculation to work out for oneself a world on such a 'plane'—and put in tables and chairs, etc., all of the proper shape; not because our 'water' creatures really use tables and chairs, and beds and blankets and sheets, but because it is helpful for the young adventurer to get some objective idea into his mind, of how similar forces would operate if they did exist on *our* plane; and then when he has done that, it will be more easy to deduce the rules, and laws, and principles, and so prepare himself mentally for sensible experience of the subjective reality of regions other than the normal physical.

Nor need the self-complacent be contemptuous of this child-like exercise, no matter how nonsensically it may appear to work out at the beginning, for we must begin with the elements (and 'elementals' too!) in this life-school. It is a legitimate training of the imagination, and a good game to play at—guesses at what to expect.

Let us cast away our staid notions of physics, and mathematics, and metaphysics, and other wise conceits for the time, and turn our water into ice and our earth into sand.

Thus our 'water,' our emotional nature, becomes 'fixed'—unflutterable! Our earth, our physical, becomes sand — decomposed without losing its form; form held together in such a way that it is no obstruction. That means that mind has transformed itself from the objective to the subjective, but remains the same.

Physical freaks may be sometimes significant of what is happening normally somewhere in the subjective. They are of course less abnormal than a physical world with spheres and cubes reversed, which we have taken on the physical as an indication of what perchance may be the nature of the so-called 'astral'; and exercising the physical brain to imagine such a state of affairs is a healthy way whereby a just idea of this 'otherness' may be deduced. It is unwise to bind the 'astral' world by our laws; it is saner to imagine the physical world bound by *its* laws — and freed by its laws; then it may be that some helpful ideas will come.

The actual realisation, I believe, begins when the subtle body is, so to speak, capable of 'decomposing' into 'hundreds of thousands'; this is the beginning, the elemental side of the new birth, when the inner body begins to obey the laws of that region. The mind loses its grasp of physical matter as usually experienced; the

body for greater consciousness becomes as sand —countless. The emotions are fixed or stable, and all is in train for the birth of a new force with which to move and think. The neophyte, or new-grown one, is on the countless side of things, yet form remains. But 'astral' and 'physical' go topsy-turvy, and form becomes transparent, and when shattered immediately recomposes itself. It becomes self-adjustable.

XX.

ON THE NATURE OF THE QUEST.*

In the first place I would warn you that my present adventure must be regarded as the excursion of a freelance simply; I am not putting forward a document approved by a council, nor am I the spokesman of any settled opinion. What I have to say is advanced by way of suggestion only, as one mode of envisaging a high ideal, one manner of regarding certain means which have been proposed for winning towards it.

At this our first meeting, it seems most appropriate to consider (though of necessity briefly and in very general terms) the purpose of our association and the objects we propose to pursue. By 'purpose' I mean our hopes and aspirations, the ideal we have in mind; by 'objects' those intermediate ways and means which we propose to use for the attainment of this purpose.

* The substance of an address delivered by the President at the Inaugural Meeting of The Quest Society, at Kensington Town Hall, London, W., on Thursday, March 11, 1909.

The name we have chosen, 'The Quest Society,' is eloquent of our purpose; the means of furthering it are briefly summarised in our two objects, namely:

"1. To promote investigation and comparative study of religion, philosophy and science, on the basis of experience.

"2. To encourage the expression of the ideal in beautiful forms."

Further, to assure ourselves that we are setting forth on no vain undertaking, we have chosen as our motto the words of comfort uttered by one who had achieved the end of the Quest:

"Seek, and ye shall find."

As to purpose, then, let us first consider the name, the distinctive title, 'Quest.' Why have we so styled our endeavour? Many other titles were proposed and considered, some of them excellent names, each in their several ways; but the lot has been cast in favour of 'The Quest Society,' and this has been received with such general favour that we may well be content with the choice. It suggests a wealth of meaning; it is a name into which can be read both depth and dignity.

In its most pedestrian sense 'quest' connotes simply 'seeking' or 'search'; but does it not already, even for the most prosaic, call up before

the mind a further sense, does it not evoke an atmosphere of romance, of poetry, of things spiritual? Has it not already, in common use, a different 'feel' from plain and simple 'search'?

A number of the titles suggested favoured the term 'research'; but as 'research' by itself was too vague in any case, and for some too ambitious or too cold, it had to be qualified. The great difficulty was to find a qualification on which all could agree. Limit of some sort there must be, no matter how we might chafe at limitation. Many epithets were suggested, only to be rejected. For instance, 'The Mystical Research Society' was favoured by some; but 'mystical' requires further definition, even for those who are genuine lovers of mysticism in its best sense, while in modern times the name has so fallen from its high estate that it has become a veritable stumbling-block for most people.

The simple word 'quest,' however, seemed to solve all our difficulties. It could be made to include both all that is best in research and all that is most desirable in mysticism, and a host of other things as well. 'Quest' seems capable of expressing all that the spirit of 'research' suggests — and something more; indeed just that something which I venture to believe is the main purpose of every member of our Society.

With the word 'research' we rightly associate

the most painstaking devotion, the most laborious and self-sacrificing study, the most brilliant achievements of the mind of man. But research is unending; there is no finality in it. The goal of the scientist, in the nature of things, can be but a temporary goal; with every fresh discovery there is a momentary, a temporary reward, but that is all; always more and yet more remains to be discovered. The scientist is like a traveller on a mountain path; every new height attained, every new discovery made, discovers in its turn but a higher summit beyond, reveals to the weary though courageous climber only how great, how infinite, is the further distance he has to cover.

Research must be scientific; every stage along the path, every step of that stage, is of utmost importance; from beginning to end of it there must be one complete chain of reasoning, one unbroken line of demonstration; should any link be found missing, any flaw be discovered, any step omitted along the route traversed, the result is invalidated, the end is not attained, and the climb must be begun anew. Even when the temporary goal is achieved, it is but the starting-point for further research. There is no finality this way; though many virtues are developed in the searcher.

But—if I may be allowed to declare my own

belief freely—in all ages and at all times, there has ever been and ever will be, while man is man, one Quest. That Quest is final and complete; when found it is the beginning and end of all things for man. It pertains to the depths and not to the surfaces of things, to life and not to death, to the eternal and not to the temporal. No matter what route of research is traversed, no matter how many steps along the innumerous paths of the ever-becoming, the final result is in no way affected; for it is something 'more,' something 'greater,' something 'other' than the product or total of any series.

This one Quest is the search or call of the soul for That alone which can completely satisfy the whole man, and make him self-initiative and self-creative. The call of the soul for its complement, its fulfilment, for all that which it seems not to be, may be figured forth by the mind as the longing of the bride for the bridegroom, or the search of the bridegroom for the bride. In folk-tale, myth, and sacred story, it has been set forth in countless modes throughout the ages. It may be found in all the great mystery-myths of the mystic union, the sacred marriage; in folk-tales it may be romantically described as the search of the gallant young prince who sets forth in the true spirit of adventure to find the beautiful princess,

perchance asleep in some foreign land. It may be figured by the noble knight who fights bravely through the battles of life, whose one goal is to find the mystic treasure of life immortal and restore it to the purified temple, its own true resting-place. It may be represented by the devout worshipper, ever kneeling at the feet of the Saviour, awaiting that supreme moment when all sins shall be washed away, and he shall rise in a new and perfect body to live for ever in the immediate Presence of his Lord. It is the transmutation of every desire and lust that leads to bondage into the pure love that seeks the liberty of union with the Divine Will alone.

There are many other forms in which this Quest can be represented in folk-tale and legend, in story and myth, in mystic rite and sacred ordinance; but whatever form may be invented by the mind of man for the living idea, or whatever mode may be impressed upon the substance of his inmost nature, the goal, the end of it, is one and the same. It is this: salvation, satisfaction, certitude, completeness, perfection, wholeness; relief and rest from our present state of strain and tension, freedom from the separateness of bondage, the reconciliation of all opposites in the all-embracing immediacy of self-realisation.

So while research—investigation and comparative study—is one of our chief interests, the purpose of our Society, I would believe, embraces something far deeper, far more subtle, something more spiritual in the highest and profoundest meaning of the word—a more living, more vital, more immediate quest.

This brings me to the next idea which we should, doubtless, all like to see associated with the activities of our undertaking—that of life, vitality. I sincerely hope it may be found that we are not in search of knowledge only, but that our seeking is also for deeper and intenser life. And here again the name that has been chosen can stand us in good stead, for it can be used very appropriately, as we have seen, to body forth this idea. Our search is not only for Light but also for Life, and above all for the Good; for these three are one in the Fulness of Deity—Mind and Soul and Spirit.

The word 'research' generally calls up before the mind the scientist dealing with the mysteries of matter, trying to become master of them, to enslave more and more the latent powers of the material universe, and make them do his bidding. With the word 'quest' other ideas are mirrored in the mind; that into which we search ceases to be dead substance to be

coerced by the monarch—man; it becomes living, vital. We no longer seek to enslave; we ask to be allowed to co-operate. All around us is life and intelligence to be spoken to, to be requested. The universe of those who are spiritually awakened is the vital intelligent universe of the ancients and sages; it has a soul.

In this vital Quest, then, man does not seek to dominate more and more; he hardly even seeks to acquire more and more knowledge for himself. It is rather a quest which transcends his personality—transliminal as well as cisliminal. It is not simply the searching of the mind after knowledge; it is rather the yearning of the soul for more bountiful life. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." It is not only the mind of man daring to stand up before all the worlds of gods and men, saying: 'I will know.' It is, over and above this, the call of the soul, the gentle voice of the lover to the Loved, the prayer of the devout worshipper to his Lord. It is the way of knowledge and love united; as Thrice-greatest Hermes has it:

"Seek'st thou for God, thou seekest for the Beautiful. One is the Path that leadeth unto It—Devotion joined with Gnosis."

Man must first seek in order to find; and then

at each finding he should call, call to the Beloved to awake. He should refuse to be satisfied with knowledge; he should go still further, and call to the Soul of Nature to array herself in her living robes of glory. For not until then will the true lover be satisfied, not until then will the soul have found its true source and power—That from which it comes and has departed, and which alone can perfect it, reform it into a wholeness, and so give it the peace which passeth all understanding, that true initiation, or consummation of the spiritual marriage, the *unio mystica*, or union of the within and the without, which illumines the mind, expands and intensifies the consciousness, and partakes of the nature of the deepest and most vital experience of self-realisation. This is the Divine bequest that has been willed to us, according to the testimony of the greatest souls among men.

The chief business of the spiritual soul, then, is how to set to work to make itself capable of receiving more and more bountifully of this its true inheritance. Can the objects of The Quest Society serve as means for the furtherance of this great purpose? They seem to me to be admirably suited to be so used.

By the first object we are encouraged to question, to dig deep down within the outer appearances of things for the hidden truth. We

would promote research, investigation ; we would specially commend the comparative study of religion, philosophy and science in their bearing on the nature of experience. For in such study rightly pursued we see man whose consciousness is normally towards external and changing things, working to attain to a consciousness of things internal and eternal.

By the second object we would encourage man to draw forth from himself that glorious heritage of the soul, the power to create, to express the beauty, truth and harmony that lies within.

Here we have, I believe, the two great complementary courses which must be followed by every individual soul, by every man who is struggling to free himself from the bonds of separateness, in the pursuit of That which is the One Desirable, the true purpose of the Quest.

First we have the throwing of the mind outwards to things beyond, in order to widen and deepen it and increase its sympathies—the attempt to find the truth, and so to unite, in every search, with that Soul of Intelligence which indwells in everything. In this way we enlarge the mind and ever expand further and further our own field of consciousness, our capacity for awareness.

Then comes the calling forth of that comple-

mentary power of the soul—the passion of the soul to create, to express that which this extension of consciousness has awakened within its deepest nature.

First we seek and question in order to arouse in ourselves the dormant powers of the mind; we go forth with energy to do battle with the world of objects around. Next we rest, and call forth that God-given power latent in man, the power to mirror forth in beauteous forms that understanding of things which we have attempted to make our own, to possess, to master. For until this power has been aroused unto creativeness, wisdom is not truly ours. Wisdom is the creative power of Deity. We may have knowledge of many different things, we may be learned in many sciences, but true wisdom, I hold, is other; it carries with it, as it were, an innate, immediate and spontaneous response to things without, as they appear to be 'without' to normal consciousness. True wisdom is an ever-present initiator; it is not a fixed knowledge of any or many different appearances. Wisdom is a subtle, spiritual, instant power to understand the soul of things, and also to apply this understanding ever to immediate opportunity.

From another point of view the two objects of The Quest Society might be thought of in

connection with the practices of concentration and meditation—if we may be permitted to employ these terms without prejudice and in a very extended sense. Or, again, to use one of the most graphic, vital and fundamental of all figures, one that is very familiar to lovers of Indian mystic lore and symbolism,—we might think of these two objects as the out-going and returning breath of the mind; the two are complementary, indeed they must work together simultaneously for the true life of immediate understanding.

This brings me to another living idea, a matter of vital importance, expressed in the first object by the single word 'experience,' in connection with the investigation and comparative study of religion, philosophy and science.

There are many ways of considering religion, philosophy and science; they may well be regarded as a trinity in unity, where no one is before or after another, no one greater or less than another; they may also be thought of as each severally containing the others; they may, again, each be looked upon as the means of at-one-ment between the remaining two. For the moment let us regard them in one mode of the last way only.

Religion we might roughly consider as an

activity of the soul, science as an activity of the mind; and then philosophy, in its deepest sense, might not inappropriately be regarded as that which alone can unite these two natural partners. Apart these twain are ever barren. Religion divorced from reason tends towards fanaticism and superstition; science, when separated from its lawful partner, the spirit of religion, tends towards scepticism, materialism, and atheism. Philosophy, in its best sense, is that which should unite them—philosophy as not only the love but also the practice of wisdom. Is it too daring to call philosophy an art? In olden days, at any rate, it was indubitably regarded as one, in so far as it was something that had to be lived and practised.

If we might thus be allowed to use philosophy in this its deepest meaning, then in its association with religion and science, we might even go so far as to consider it the art of all arts, the 'craft' of uniting, of joining together, of at-oning, these two great orders of human activity, religion and science—the union or marriage of the activities of the soul with the activities of the mind, the joining of the powers and activities of these two eternal partners in a practical form, and through this union the bringing to birth in the man that great consummation, the life of spiritual experience, of

self-realisation. And by 'spiritual experience' I do not mean abnormal happenings—these may or may not occur—but a life of rest, of poise and balance, of peaceful understanding, an inner recognition of the great truths and great powers which are hidden all around us, and which, when brought within the immediate consciousness of a man, lead to his co-operating with them in the divine scheme of life, so that though he apparently still lives in bondage as other men live, he actually is in a state of freedom which other men know not of.

Spiritual ignorance is bondage; it is the root of all bondage with which man is bound. With wisdom comes freedom, and with freedom comes greater power and intenser life. And here we are using ignorance in its deepest sense; not as the opposite of knowledge simply, but as the antithesis of that spiritual science or wisdom which is of the nature of vital Gnosis—to use one of the many names that have been given to the Quest, as the means of reaching the Divine. It is vital rather than material knowledge, spiritual rather than intellectual; and the inquiry into its nature and comparative study of the many attempts throughout the centuries that have been made to realise it, are most potent means to help us in our pursuit of the Quest.

I would now conclude these brief and fragmentary reflections on the objects of The Quest Society by dwelling for a moment on our desire to encourage the expression of the ideal in forms of beauty. Speaking with all hesitation, as a layman and one of the profane, I would venture to express my belief that the highest use and purpose of art is to reveal and express the inner soul of things. Beauty in art seems to consist in clearness of expression, or vividness of reflection, of the ideas and feelings or moods of the soul and of life. Some arts lend themselves more to the expression of the ideas of the soul, others to the expression of the passions of the soul.

Beauty and truth from this point of view are seen to be closely related. The man who speaks clearly what is in his mind is the man of truth. The man of shuffling speech, the man who does not try to reveal or express clearly, but rather tries to conceal, is the man of untruth. If truth in this connection may be said to be the intentional and deliberate revealing of idea or inner motive, then beauty may be considered to be the unconscious or natural revealing of it. Untruth is deliberate concealment; ugliness may not be deliberate concealment, but it is confusion and the lack of capacity to reveal the truth.

The formal mind of man may be able admirably to register and record in words facts, but the artist can create forms which are expressions of vital truths,—that is to say, they are more clearly related to the soul of things; there is in them a life-beat or rhythm, a further method by means of which there can be conveyed to the mind of man greater power, intenser life, and increased stimulus to understanding and experiencing. The registration of facts is a record of the appearances of things, the artistic nature is in contact with the heart, the depth, the life of things.

For beauty there must be a certain rhythm and symmetry and harmony; and when this is found, there is born a soul, or atmosphere, as it were, which is a new power linking the form to that living idea which the form is trying to express.

This, I take it, is one of the reasons why we are anxious to encourage the expression of the ideal in forms of beauty; and in this connection I have been struck by a quotation from a lecture recently (March 5, 1909) delivered at Cambridge by the well-known painter, Mr. W. Rothenstein.

"We all know," he said, "the immense stimulus we get from meeting with any profound interpretation of life, when it is expressed in terms

of great beauty; we get this excitation forcibly from those writings which are so impregnated with wisdom, understanding of the hearts of men and grandeur of vision that each civilisation claims for them a divine origin. Something of this inspiration is found in all true works of art, and this exaltation, this added sense of the value and significance of life, must, I think, form the basis of our appreciation of every form of beauty."

Art, however, is not greater than science, nor science higher than art; art and science are of equal dignity and value, they are complementary to one another. The scientist tries to stand firm on the bedrock of knowledge; the artist bathes in the waters of life. The beginning and end of science is a fixed point; the goal of the artist is motion. What greater praise can we bestow upon a work of art than to say it is full of life and movement? The scientist tries to hold life and force still, to chain and imprison it; the artist endeavours to make that which is still become instinct with life and motion. The scientist tries to encompass life; the artist strives to infuse life.

Even from this brief reference to a high subject, which many are far more competent to treat than myself, I hope it is clear that our second object works together with the first as

a potent means for the better realisation of the purpose we have in view.

Such, put very briefly, are a few of the ideas that have occurred to me in pondering the objects of The Quest Society. There are many other points of view, and each will naturally regard both purpose and means from his own special standpoint. Indeed the scope of our objects is so wide and far-reaching that the more one thinks over them, the more amazed does one become at the vistas of possibility that open up in all directions before the mind's eye. If it were a programme of research simply that we had in view, it would be an endless undertaking, a hopeless task; but the spirit of the Quest can transmute every search equally into a means to the same end. There are as many paths Home as there are souls to tread them, and as many ways of search as there are types of mind or modes of life.

Of the multiplicity and variety of the means of search I have said nothing; it is too vast a subject to attempt in a brief adventure such as this must be. I have, therefore, in the short time at my disposal, dwelt rather on the more vital side of such investigation and comparative study, so as to distinguish between what I would call the spirit of the Quest and the forms of research in which that Quest may be pursued.

If the spirit of the Quest is realised, every type of mind and every line of research can be utilised for a common end; and it is only by such co-operation, I believe, that results of vital value can be achieved. The ideal is so sublime that no one dreams it can at present be realised in any but a small measure; it is, however, so desirable, it holds forth such high promise, that it is well worth while to put forth every effort to work towards so fair an end with every means in our power. If we can do nothing else, an association with objects and aims such as ours should be able to do much to help in arousing interest in the deeper experiences of the soul, in the freedom of spiritual life, and in the possibility of a truly vital science; and this alone is a noble and beneficial work.

Indeed, is there anything better or more legitimate that one man may do for another than to awaken such interest in him? Is there any other help so far-reaching, yet so little confining, so devoid of dogmatism and coercion? Where a man's interests are, there in truth does he live; for there is his world of experience, there, and there only, do mind and soul co-operate in one activity. If a man's interest is aroused in the possibilities of a deeper and more actual and intimate life, then the spirit of the Quest becomes alive in him, and he will start

on many a self-initiated adventure to reach the goal, to work out his own salvation and self-realisation. He is started on the journey Home. Such a start is a veritable initiation, the beginning of a new birth, the inbreathing of a new life and spirit.

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